NATION

Cleared of water resource misuse allegations: Vantara

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BUSINESS

Sensex closes above 83,000; Nifty up 93 pts

≫ Page: 7 ≪

SPORTS

Neeraj misses podium for first time in 27 events

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SALAR

DIGITAL ENGLISH DAILY, BENGALURU

سالار روزنامہ بنگلور

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Sebi gives Adani clean chit on Hindenburg allegations

NEW DELHI, 18 SEPT

Markets regulator Sebi has given a clean chit to Gautam Adani and his group, dismissing allegations of stock manipulation made by US-based short-seller Hindenburg Research. In two detailed orders issued Thursday, Sebi said it found no evidence that the Adani Group used related parties to route funds into its listed companies or violated insider trading and public shareholding norms.

Hindenburg's January 2023 report had accused Adani Group firms of funnelling money through entities like Adicorp Enterprises, Milestone Tradelinks, and Rehvar Infrastructure to manipulate stock prices of Adani Power and Adani Enterprises. Sebi's investigation, however, concluded that the transactions did not qualify as related-party dealings and found no breach of disclosure regulations.

Sebi board member Kamlesh C Varshney said there was also no violation of substantial acquisition norms or any attempt to mislead investors. As a result, no penalties or liabilities were imposed on the group or its executives.

The Sebi ruling comes after nearly two years of scrutiny and speculation following Hindenburg's report, which had caused a massive stock rout, wiping out over USD 150 billion in Adani Group's market value at its lowest point.

Adani Group has consistently denied the allegations. An expert panel appointed by the Supreme Court had earlier found no prima facie evidence of wrongdoing.

Buoyed by the verdict, Gautam Adani said those who spread false narratives using Hindenburg's "fraudulent and motivated" report owe the nation an apology. "The truth has prevailed," he posted on X, alongside the Indian tricolour. —*PTI*

Gautam Adani ***PHOTO: PTI***

Modi calls Nepal's new PM, reaffirms India's support

KATHMANDU, 18 SEPT

Nepal's newly-appointed Prime Minister Sushila Karki on Thursday held a telephone conversation with Prime Minister Narendra Modi, who expressed his support for the interim government in fulfilling its priorities. It was the first telephone conversation by Karki with any foreign head of state. Karki, 73, became Nepal's first woman PM on Friday, ending days of political uncertainty after the ouster of former PM KP Sharma Oli following youth-led 'Gen Z' protests against corruption and social media ban. Modi congratulated Karki on her historic appointment as, the Foreign Ministry said in a statement. —*PTI*

Dasara row: SC to hear plea against Banu's invitation

NEW DELHI, 18 SEPT

The Supreme Court on Thursday agreed to hear a plea challenging the State government's decision to invite International Booker Prize winner Banu Mushtaq to inaugurate Mysuru Dasara this year. A bench comprising Chief Justice of India (CJI) BR Gavai and Justice K Vinod Chandran was urged that the festival will start on 22 September and the matter needed to be heard urgently. "A non-Hindu has been allowed to perform Agreshwari pooja at Mysuru temple on 22 September in Karnataka," a lawyer said, seeking an urgent hearing.— *PTI*

>>>More on Page 2

Online Gaming Act to come into effect from 1 October

NEW DELHI, 18 SEPT

The Promotion and Regulation of Online Gaming Act that bans all forms of online money games, would be implemented from 1 October, IT Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw said on Thursday. The Act, passed by Parliament last month, bars all forms of online money games while promoting e-sports and other online games. The Minister said that the government had engaged in discussions with the industry, even after the online gaming legislation was passed and that will hold one more round of discussions, he promised. Sources said one of the concerns flagged by the industry is around how to return the money that is still left in user accounts. —*PTI*

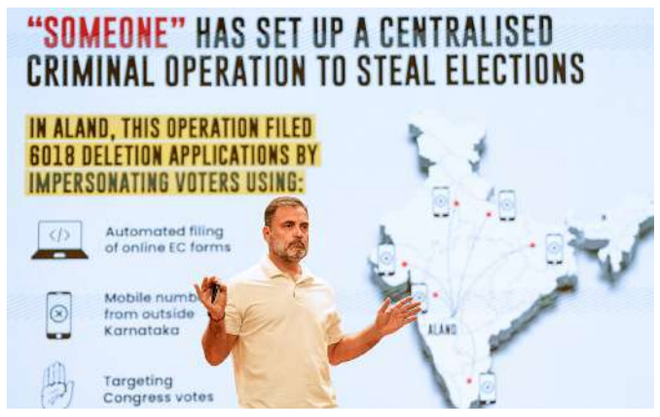
Plea in HC against Arundhati's book over smoking pic

KOCHI, 18 SEPT

A plea in the Kerala High Court has urged it to prohibit sale, circulation and display of Booker Prize winner Arundhati Roy's book, 'Mother Mary Come to Me', with its present cover where she is shown smoking a cigarette without the statutory health warning. A bench of Chief Justice Nitin Jamdar and Justice Basant Balaji on Thursday asked central government to inform the court whether there was any mechanism to deal with such issues and listed further hearing on 25 September. The plea claimed that "glorification of smoking" by an eminent author amounts to creating a false belief, further stating that it violates the Cigarettes and Other Tobacco Products Act (COTPA), 2003. —*PTI*

'Cong voters deleted before polls, 6K targeted in K'taka'

RaGa says software and fake logins used to purge voters


"SOMEONE" HAS SET UP A CENTRALISED CRIMINAL OPERATION TO STEAL ELECTIONS
IN ALAND, THIS OPERATION FILED 6018 DELETION APPLICATIONS BY IMPERSONATING VOTERS USING:
Automated filing of online EC forms
Mobile numb from outside Karnataka
Targeting Congress votes
ALAND

Leader of Opposition in the Lok Sabha and Congress leader Rahul Gandhi addresses a press conference, in New Delhi, Thursday ***PHOTO: PTI***

NEW DELHI, 18 SEPT

Congress leader Rahul Gandhi has launched a scathing attack on Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) Gyanesh Kumar, accusing him of protecting those involved in "vote chori" and undermining democracy.

Citing data from Karnataka's Aland constituency, Gandhi claimed Congress voters were being systematically and centrally targeted for deletion using software-driven methods.

At a press conference in Delhi, Gandhi said over 6,000 voter deletions were attempted in Aland during the 2023 Karnataka Assembly elections, facilitated via fake logins and mobile numbers from outside the state. He alleged the operation was not the work of booth-level workers but a well-organised, resource-heavy campaign using call centres and automated tools.

"The CID in Karnataka sent 18 letters in 18 months to the Election Commission seeking basic data like IP addresses and OTP logs. The EC refused. This proves Gyanesh Kumar is protecting those behind this mass voter deletion," Gandhi alleged.

He also cited Maharashtra's Rajura constituency, where 6,850 voters were allegedly added using similar fraudulent methods. On stage, Gandhi presented victims of the alleged voter fraud, including Suryakant, accused of filing 12 deletion forms in 14 minutes, and Babita Choudhari, whose vote was wrongly deleted. "This is software-based deletion, happening in seconds, even at 4 am.," he said.

EC rejected Gandhi's claims as "incorrect and baseless", insisting no vote can be deleted without due process. The office of the Karnataka Chief Electoral Officer said all available information has already been shared with Superintendent of Police, Kalaburagi.

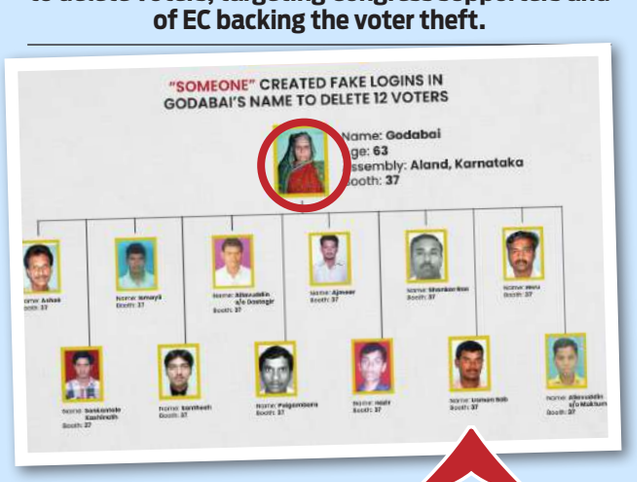
BJP accused him of trying to stoke chaos and create in India the kind of unrest seen in Nepal and Bangladesh.

Gandhi demanded the EC share data with CID within a week, warning that refusal would confirm its complicity in the "murder of the Constitution". He also hinted at future revelations, calling them a "hydrogen bomb". —*PTI*

>>>More on Pages 2 & 3

WHAT ARE THE ALLEGATIONS MADE BY RAGA?

Cong leader Rahul Gandhi has accused "someone" of running a centralised, software-driven operation to delete voters, targeting Congress supporters and of EC backing the voter theft.



WHERE AND WHEN:
Aland Assembly Seat, Karnataka;
2023 polls

6,018 voters ALLEGEDLY DELETED VIA:
- Automated EC form submissions.
- Mobile numbers from outside Karnataka.

CURIOUS CASE OF GODABAI
Rahul cited a specific case involving a woman named Godabai, whose name was used to delete 12 voters. Godabai was unaware of this.
- In a video, Godabai says: "I have no idea about any voter deletion."

RAHUL'S QUESTIONS:
- Whose numbers were used?
- Who generated OTPs?
- Where was this operation run from?

Source: AICC

BURIED UNDER DEBRIS

1 dead, 11 missing as rains batter U'khand

GOPESHWAR, 18 SEPT

One person has died, 11 are feared trapped, and 20 others have been injured after landslides and flash floods triggered by heavy rainfall devastated four villages in Uttarakhand's Chamoli district on Thursday.

The State Emergency Operation Centre (SEOC) in Dehradun confirmed the recovery of one body, identified as Narendra Singh, 42, and the rescue of three others — two women and a child — from the debris in Kuntari Lagaphali village.

Eleven people remain missing: seven from Kuntari Lagaphali, and two each from Kuntari Lagasarpani and Dhurma. Chief Minister Pushkar Singh Dhami earlier stated that 14 were unaccounted for. The affected villages — Kuntari Lagaphali, Kuntari Lagasarpani, Sera, and Dhurma — all fall under the Nandanagar area, already impacted by ongoing land subsidence.

Heavy rains destroyed 33 houses, several shops, and cowsheds.

Over 200 residents have been affected, with 150–200 villagers from Kuntari Lagaphali relocated to safer locations. Search and rescue operations, led by the NDRF, SDRF, ITBP, police, and fire services, are underway. Among the injured is a child with serious head injuries, being airlifted to AIIMS Rishikesh. —*PTI*

>>>More on Page 4

Kimmel taken off air over barb at Kirk's death

NEW YORK, 18 SEPT

ABC suspended Jimmy Kimmel's late-night show indefinitely beginning Wednesday after comments that he made about Charlie Kirk's killing led a group of ABC-affiliated stations to say it would not air the show.

Kimmel, the veteran late-night comic, made several comments about the reaction to Kirk's assassination on 'Jimmy Kimmel Live!' Monday and Tuesday nights, including that "many in MAGA land are working very hard to capitalise on the murder of Charlie Kirk." —*PTI*

>>>More on Page 6

Pak & Saudi sign defence pact, India to study 'impact'

ISLAMABAD, 18 SEPT

Pakistan and Saudi Arabia have signed a defence agreement, which declares that any attack on either country will be considered "an aggression against both".

The agreement was signed by Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman on Wednesday during the Pakistani leader's day-long visit to the Gulf Kingdom.

The deal comes days after an Israeli attack on Qatar, a key US ally in the Gulf region.

The Strategic Mutual Defence Agreement states that "any aggression against either country shall be considered an aggression against both".

EAM spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal said India will study implications of the move. —*PTI*

>>>More on Page 6

CJI faces flak, says he respects all religions

NEW DELHI, 18 SEPT

Chief Justice of India B R Gavai on Thursday affirmed his respect for "all religions" in the wake of the online criticism his comments garnered in a matter over the reconstruction of a Lord Vishnu idol.

The court had dismissed the plea seeking directions to reconstruct and reinstall a seven-foot idol of Lord Vishnu at the Javari Temple, part of the UNESCO World Heritage Khajuraho temple complex in Madhya Pradesh's Chhatarpur district.

When the CJI mentioned how he was misquoted, Solicitor General Tushar Mehta said he has known the CJI since last 10 years and Justice Gavai visits all religious places with equal reverence and would not even think of insulting any deity.

Senior advocate Sanjay Nul, who appeared for the petitioner, also expressed serious concerns over the wrong social media posts. —*PTI*

US revokes visas of Indians over drug trafficking

NEW DELHI, 18 SEPT

The United States has revoked and denied visas to several Indian business executives and corporate leaders for their alleged involvement in trafficking fentanyl precursors, the US Embassy in New Delhi announced on Thursday.

While the embassy did not disclose the identities of those affected, it confirmed the punitive action was taken under Sections 221(i), 212(a)(2)(C), and 214(b) of the US Immigration and Nationality Act. These measures render the individuals and their close family members potentially ineligible for travel to the US.

US Chargé d'Affaires Jorgan Andrews stated that the embassy is committed to combating illicit drug trafficking. —*PTI*

Indian detained in US over decades-old case

Paramjit Singh, an Indian-origin businessman and US permanent resident, has been detained by ICE for over a month due to a decades-old case. Arrested at Chicago O'Hare Airport on 30 July, Singh, who has lived in the US for over 30 years and is father to US-born children, was held for five days despite suffering from a brain tumour. He was later hospitalised, with his family only informed upon receiving a medical bill.

'FAULTY' FUEL SWITCHES

Kin of 4 AI crash victims sue Boeing

NEW YORK, 18 SEPT

Families of four victims of the Air India Flight 171 crash have filed a lawsuit in the US against aircraft manufacturer Boeing and parts maker Honeywell, alleging negligence and design flaws. The crash occurred in June shortly after take-off from Ahmedabad, killing all 260 people on board and 19 on the ground.

Filed in a Delaware court, the lawsuit claims that faulty fuel switches caused the crash. It cites a 2018 FAA advisory warning that the fuel switches on Boeing 787 Dreamliners could be inadvertently moved, potentially cutting off fuel supply. Though the advisory recommended inspections, it did not mandate them.

Aircraft Accident Investigation Bureau (AAIB) reported that the plane's fuel switches shifted from 'RUN' to 'CUTOFF' almost simultaneously, cutting off engine thrust.

The suit argues that Boeing and Honeywell were aware of this risk since the development of the aircraft but failed to act.

"Instead of issuing mandatory fixes or replacement parts, Boeing and Honeywell did nothing," the lawsuit states. The switches' placement allegedly made them vulnerable to accidental activation during normal cockpit activity.

The AAIB's preliminary report included a cockpit exchange: "Why did you cut off fuel?" asked one pilot. The other replied, "I did not do so." The report did not identify which pilot spoke —*Agencies*

US may scrap 25% duty on India: CEA

KOLKATA, 18 SEPT

Chief Economic Adviser V Anantha Nageswaran said a resolution to the US-India tariff dispute could arrive within eight to 10 weeks, with Washington potentially scrapping the 25 per cent penal duty imposed in August over India's Russian oil purchases.

Speaking at events in Delhi and Kolkata, he indicated the reciprocal Indian duty might also be reduced to 10–15 per cent.

While stressing this was his personal assessment, Nageswaran warned prolonged tariffs could hurt Indian exports. He noted India's real GDP grew 7.8 per cent in Q1, driven by strong manufacturing, services, and agriculture.

Rural demand remains resilient, urban demand is rising, and GST relief should boost consumption. He said the rupee may strengthen long-term. —*PTI*

CONG DOUBLES DOWN ON VOTE CHORI CLAIM

BJP again asks 'entitled' Cong to go to court

BENGALURU/NEW DELHI, 18 SEPT

Congress Leader Rahul Gandhi's claims about vote deletion in the Aland constituency in the State triggered a political slugfest, with the Congress doubling down on claims about the BJP targeting minority communities, while the Opposition party said "go to court".

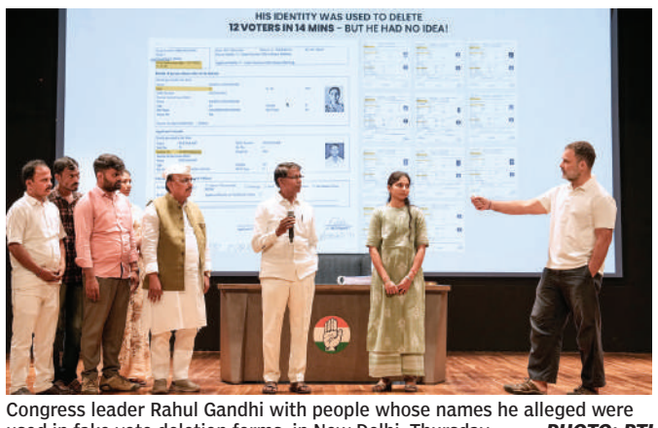
Congress MLA BR Patil, who won the Assembly election from Aland with a margin of over 10,000 votes in 2023 alleged that there was targeted deletion of minority, Scheduled Caste and backward caste votes. He said requests were made to delete "my voters in my constituency and not other voters".

Patil said, "When I learnt about it (deletion of votes), Karnataka Minister Priyank Kharge and I went to the Election Commission and the Deputy Commissioner and we held a press conference."

"After this, the returning officer carried out a verification. The officer ordered a status quo. If the status quo was not maintained and 6,994 votes were deleted then I would have lost the election," he added.

Kharge alleged that Form 7 was misused under the previous BJP government to delete voters "en masse".

Form 7 is an application for objecting inclusion of the name of the other person, or seeking deletion of one's own name, or seeking deletion of any other person's name in the electoral roll.



Congress leader Rahul Gandhi with people whose names he alleged were used in fake vote deletion forms, in New Delhi, Thursday *PHOTO: PTI*

> **Based on the complaint of the Election Commission an FIR was lodged. The CID investigates (but) they refuse to participate in the investigation of your own complaint. Then why did you complain?... It shows that there is something fishy.... It is time the CID does some real police work.**
>
> -AS Ponnanna, Legal advisor to CM told Salar News

> **Was Aland only the tip of the iceberg? In 2018, the BJP won the seat narrowly. In 2023, nearly 6,000 deletions were attempted. In 2024, the BJP again led in this segment. How many such manipulations have gone undetected in other constituencies? How many results were influenced?**
>
> -Siddaramaiah, Chief Minister

> **Rahul Gandhi's 'Vote Chori' drama is nothing but an entitled Congress ploy to attack the Election Commission and insult the people's mandate. The data shows Congress's votes rose while BJP's share dipped. The people of Aland gave their mandate to Congress, and BJP accepted it.**
>
> -BY Vijayendra, State BJP President

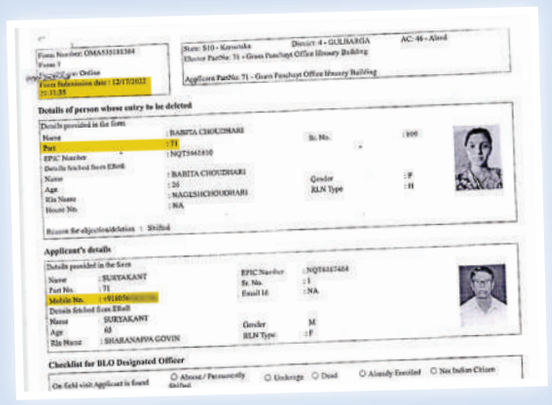
Deputy Chief Minister DK Shivakumar added that similar instances had occurred in the KR Puram constituency.

However, State BJP President BY Vijayendra noted that the while BJP won the 2018 Assembly election in Aland, Congress took it in 2023. "Let them submit an affidavit to the EC or go to court." *—Agencies*

WAS A SOFTWARE USED TO TAKE DATA FROM EC & DELETE VOTERS?

12 DELETIONS IN 14 MINUTES

- Rahul highlighted a case involving a man named Suryakant.
- He submitted 12 voter deletion forms within just 14 minutes.
- One of the names removed was Babita Chaudhary.
- When Babita confronted Suryakant, he claimed to have no knowledge of deleting her name.



TWO APPLICATIONS FILLED AND SUBMITTED IN 36 SECONDS – HUMANLY IMPOSSIBLE. Try
Form Submission date : 12/19/2022 04:07:40
Form Submission date : 12/19/2022 04:08:16

2 FORMS IN 36 SECONDS – FILED AT 4.07AM

- Rahul cited the case of a man named Nagaraj.
- Nagaraj submitted 2 voter deletion forms in just 36 seconds.
- The submissions were made at 4.07am, raising further suspicion.
- He suggested this could only be done through automation.
- The incident points to the use of software tools or scripts for rapid submissions.

PATTERN NOTICED:
In many booths, the first name (serial no. 1) was used to file deletion Indicates a programmatic approach using EC data.

Rahul said an FIR was registered in February 2023 in Karnataka, and the probe was handed over to the CID. Over the next 18 months, the CID wrote 18 times to the ECI but received no response

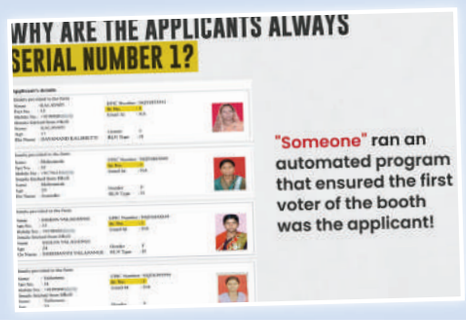
HOW THE SCAM WAS UNCOVERED

A booth-level officer discovered her uncle's name was missing from the rolls.

Upon investigating, she found:

- A neighbour's name was falsely used to request the deletion.
- Neither person had submitted any such request.

Source: AICC


WHY ARE THE APPLICANTS ALWAYS SERIAL NUMBER 1?
"Someone" ran an automated program that ensured the first voter of the booth was the applicant!

Dasara row: SC to hear plea against Mushtaq's invitation

NEW DELHI, 18 SEPT

The Supreme Court on Thursday agreed to hear a plea challenging the State government's decision to invite International Booker Prize winner Banu Mushtaq to inaugurate Mysuru Dasara.

A bench comprising Chief Justice of India (CJI) BR Gavai and Justice K Vinod Chandran was urged that the festival will start on 22 September and the matter needed to be heard urgently.

"A non-Hindu has been allowed to perform Agreshwari puja at Mysuru temple on 22 September," a lawyer said, seeking an urgent hearing.

On 15 September, the Karnataka High Court had refused to hear four PILs on the issue, including one by former Mysuru BJP MP Pratap Simha, stating that the petitioners failed to demonstrate any constitutional or legal violation.

The appeal against the High Court order was filed by HS Gaurav in the Supreme Court.

The plea assailed the High Court's reasoning, saying the inaugural rituals of Dasara, which take place at the Chamundeshwari Temple atop Chamundi Hills, are not merely symbolic but constitute an essential religious practice protected under Article 25 of the Constitution of India.

As per the plea, these acts cannot be performed by a non-Hindu. *—PTI*

A SLOW CRAWL

The Vrishabhavathi Valley Minor Irrigation (MI) project work has slowed traffic on Ullal Main road in Bengaluru, and ruined the roads, on Thursday *PHOTO: MOHAMMAD ASAD*

Vijayapura airport to cost Rs 618 cr: Cabinet

BENGALURU, 18 SEPT

The State Cabinet on Thursday granted approval to the revised estimate of Rs 618.75 crore for the development works of the Vijayapura "Greenfield" Airport. The cost originally approved was Rs 347.92 crore, and the additional estimated cost is Rs 270.08 crore, Law and Parliamentary Affairs Minister HK Patil said.

He said the airport will be developed in a way it facilitates the landing of big aircraft instead of only ATR aircrafts.

The Cabinet has also given its approval for the purchase of medical equipment required for setting up a cardiac unit at the Kodagu Institute of Medical Sciences under Public Private Partnership (PPP model) at an estimated cost of Rs 10.89 crore.

Patil said, the Cabinet has approved setting up of 10 "Towers of the Harmonious Call Blocking System" at central prisons in Ballari, Vijayapura, Dharwad, Shivamogga, Belagavi, Mysuru, Kalaburagi, and Tumakuru districts at an estimated cost of Rs 16.75 crore.

Approval was given for the establishment of 50 TPD (Tons Per Day) Bio CNG Plants each in Dasanapura, Kolar, and Mysuru Agricultural Produce Market Committees under Public Private Partnership at a total estimated cost of Rs 74.88 crore (Rs 24.96 crore per unit). *—PTI*

> **The Cabinet approved providing govt posts in Group-C and Group-D cadre posts to the dependents of SC/ST people, who died due to atrocities.**

HDK trains guns at Cong's 'City of potholes'

Potholes hassled commuters at Ullal main road in Bengaluru, on Thursday *PHOTO: MOHAMMAD ASAD*

BENGALURU, 18 SEPT

JD(S) leader and Union Minister HD Kumaraswamy on Thursday said it is "tragic" that the Bengaluru is now "gaining infamy as the City of potholes".

Claiming that industries are losing faith in Karnataka and migrating to neighbouring states, the former chief minister wrote on X, "We will make Bengaluru great again".

Kumaraswamy's remarks came after industry veterans in City like former Infosys CFO Mohandas Pai and Biocon Chairperson Kiran Mazumdar-Shaw urged the State government to intervene after online trucking platform BlackBuck decided to move the company out of its current location at Bellandur, citing road infrastructure issues.

Alleging that Chief Minister Siddaramaiah and his deputy DK Shivakumar are responsible for this "disgrace", he said, "today, Bengaluru and Karnataka are trapped in the hands of the incompetent and the corrupt. At every step, there is a death trap of potholes; everywhere one looks, heaps of garbage. Is this what they call Greater Bengaluru?"

In response, Shivakumar said "What is Kumaraswamy's contribution to Bengaluru as a Union minister?.... He is the right-hand man of the PM, why can't he get Rs 10,000 crores for City?"

Asked if Kumaraswamy was hatching a conspiracy, he said, "Educational institutions are making kids write letters to PM.... Let him contest the elections."

—Salar News with Agencies

FOR PUBLIC COMMITMENT

KSRTC bags two awards for service excellence

BENGALURU, 18 SEPT

The Karnataka State Road Transport Corporation (KSRTC) has bagged two prestigious awards for its service excellence and people-centric initiatives, according to a press release.

At the Radisson Hotel in Mumbai, KSRTC was honoured with the Best Transport Company of India and Most Trusted Brands (Organisation) titles. The awards were presented by actress Sudha Chandran and Vaghmare to Senior Divisional Controller Arun SN and Works Manager M Naveen.

KSRTC also secured the "Top Most Organisations with Innovative HR Practices" award at the 4th Asia Pacific HRM Congress & Awards in City. The award was to Deputy Chief Law Officer Shyamala and Law Officer Shakuntala. *—Salar News*

2 held for killing cow in Uttara Kannada

KARWAR, 18 SEPT

Two individuals have been arrested for allegedly slaughtering cattle and dumping the remains in forest land near Muggum Colony, Bhatkal, in Uttara Kannada district police said on Thursday.

The case was registered on 11 September following a complaint by Maruti, Deputy Range Forest Officer, Bhatkal, who alleged that unidentified persons had trespassed into forest land, slaughtered cattle elsewhere, and discarded the skins, bones, and other remains in the area.

The accused were arrested on Wednesday. *—PTI*

A CAN OF WORMS?

Belagavi to be bifurcated before year end: Laxmi

BELAGAVI, 18 SEPT

Women and Child Development Minister Laxmi Hebbalkar promised that the Belagavi district would bifurcate by the end of the year, and Chikkodi would be made a new district. Her comments come after Satish Jarkiholi, the district-incharge-minister, had made similar statements a few weeks ago.

"The bifurcation will be done before 31 Dec for quick access to people," Hebbalkar said on Thursday during a meeting with members of the Chikkodi Zilla Rachane Horata Samiti at her residence in Belagavi.

People from Athani taluk, situated around 150kms from district headquarters at Belagavi, have to commute for full a day for official work, both the ministers had noted. It would be easier if Chikkodi was made a district, they said.

Several Kannada organisations had objected to Jarkiholi's statement. They said that the district must remain intact until the border row with Maharashtra in the Supreme Court was settled.

MORE THAN A BIFURCATION?

People from the Gokak region are also demanding a new district, with Gokak as its headquarters.

Government sources indicate that the geographically largest district could be trifurcated with Gokak and Chikkodi as new districts.

Bailhongal, Ramdurg, Gokak and Savadatti taluks would be included in the proposed Gokak district and Athani, Chikkodi, Raibag taluks in the proposed Chikkodi district, while Belagavi, Khanapur and Hukkeri taluks would be in Belagavi district.

However, people in Bailhongal, Ramdurg and Savadatti are against joining with Gokak.

People in Bailhongal have been demanding a separate district for themselves, while people in Savadatti have urged the government to merge them with Dharward district, which is closer.

A LONG HISTORY

Late chief minister JH Patel, during his tenure from 1996 to 1999 had divided several large districts in the State. However, he did not divide Belagavi to prevent panchayat elections from going into the hands of pro-Maharashtrian groups. Kannada organisations have made similar arguments in the Supreme Court over the border dispute.

At the time, there were some four-five pro-Maharashtrian legislators in the State Assembly who claimed rights to Belagavi and other Marathi speaking places in Karnataka. They said their election victory was proof that the places should be included in Maharashtra.

WHAT ARE THEY SAYING NOW?

Both Hebalkar and Jarkiholi said the political power of pro-Maharashtrian groups is over and there's no need to be worried. *—Salar News*

Bharati Vishnuvardhan seeks land for memorial

MYSURU, 18 SEPT

Actress Bharati Vishnuvardhan on Thursday thanked the State government for announcing the Karnataka Ratna award for her late husband, actor Vishnuvardhan, on his 75th birthday.

Speaking at the actor's memorial in the City outskirts, Bharati said that if the State government allocates 10 guntas (0.25 acres) of land, they will build a memorial inside Abhiman studios.

Earlier in the day, Bharathia and her family offered pooja to the Vishnu Memorial near Udbur gate.

Many actors and fans arrived to pay tribute to the beloved actor. Members of the Fans Association served sweets to the people at the memorial.

Meanwhile, Chief Minister Siddaramaiah, Deputy Chief Minister DK Shivakumar, and Leader of the Opposition in the State Legislative Assembly, R Ashoka, also paid tribute.

Siddaramaiah, said on X, "On the occasion of his birthday, I remember and pay my respects to his immense love and admiration for Kannada and Kannadigas."

"Heartfelt tributes on the birthday of 'Sahasasimha' (the Lion of Valor), 'Abhinaya Bhargava' (the Sun of Acting), Dr Vishnuvardhan," Shivakumar said on X.

—Salar News

PHOTO: PTI

PM to launch nuclear project in R'than on 25 Sept

JAIPUR, 18 SEPT

Prime Minister Narendra Modi will visit Banswara, Rajasthan, on 25 September to lay the foundation stone for a major nuclear power project and address a public rally. BJP state president Madan Rathore, who inspected preparations on Thursday, said the project will involve an investment of Rs 45,000 crore and represents a significant step for Rajasthan's energy sector. Governor Haribhau Bagade, Chief Minister Bhajanlal Sharma, and other leaders are expected to attend. Rathore said the project will enhance India's self-reliance in energy, reflecting Modi's vision of an aatmanirbhar Bharat across electricity, water, and education sectors. He also criticised attempts to divide society for political gain, emphasising that such efforts should be rejected. *—PTI*

Kejriwal home allotment can't be on whim, says HC

NEW DELHI, 18 SEPT

The Delhi High Court on Thursday stated that allotment of residential accommodation cannot be based on the whims of authorities. The remark came during a plea by the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) seeking a bungalow for its national convener and former Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal. Justice Sachin Datta directed the joint secretary of the Union Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs and the director of the Directorate of Estates to appear virtually on 25 September. The court sought details of the procedure, stressing the need for transparency. The Centre informed the court that the Type VII bungalow at 35 Lodhi Estate had been allotted to Union MoS Pankaj Chaudhary. *—PTI*

Gopi's remarks to woman creates new controversy

PTHISSUR, 19 SEPT

Union Minister Suresh Gopi has courted controversy after he talked to an elderly woman in an alleged insensitive language during his interactive session with people in his constituency on Wednesday. The elderly woman, Anandavally, asked him whether he can help her get the money she had deposited in the Karuvannur service cooperative bank, which was caught in a scam involving CPI(M) leaders in the district. The case, in which several people lost their deposits in the bank, is being probed by the Enforcement Directorate (ED). Gopi gave an abrupt reply, saying she should approach the state Chief Minister to receive the money from the ED which had confiscated the assets of many persons involved in the scam. *—PTI*

PHOTO: PTI

Anil Vij removes 'minister' from his X bio

CHANDIGARH, 18 SEPT

Anil Vij, who holds multiple portfolios in the Haryana government, has dropped the word 'minister' from his bio on X to grow his presence on social media with his name and said that he is "not dependent on any tag". The 72-year-old BJP leader, who has more than 8 lakh followers on X, changed his bio from 'Anil Vij Minister Haryana, India' to 'Anil Vij Ambala Cantt Haryana, India' on Tuesday. He clarified that his decision to drop 'minister' from his X bio had nothing to do with his claim of a "parallel" BJP unit being run in his home constituency Ambala Cantonment. *—PTI*

Fadnavis must resign: Oppn after vote chori claims

Kharge asks who EC is shielding; Shah says Rahul protecting infiltrators

MUMBAI, 18 SEPT

Congress leader Rahul Gandhi's fresh allegations of irregularities in voters' list, including in an assembly segment in Maharashtra, triggered a war of words between the ruling and Opposition parties with the latter demanding Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis' resignation.

Opposition NCP (SP) said the Gandhi's fresh allegations raised a question mark over the integrity of the Election Commission of India (ECI), and sought an independent inquiry by the poll body into the charges.

Accusing the ECI of acting with double standards, the Congress demanded CM Fadnavis' resignation, saying he had no moral right to continue in office after Gandhi exposed "vote theft" in the Rajura assembly constituency of Chandrapur district.

Gandhi on Thursday accused Chief Election Commissioner Gyanesh Kumar of protecting those who "destroyed democracy."

Congress leader and Leader of Opposition in the Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi during a 'vote chori' press conference, in New Delhi *PHOTO: PTI*

Maharashtra Congress president Harshwardhan Sapkal claimed that 6,850 votes were manipulated in Rajura assembly constituency and even the state police registered an FIR in the matter. He accused the ECI of acting with double standards.

The ruling BJP and NCP, however, hit out at Gandhi over his allegations.

State BJP chief spokesperson Keshav Upadhye said that he should apologise to the people of India for repeatedly levelling "unfounded allegations" about the poll process.

Muslim and Adivasi communities are the next target of Gandhi, he alleged.

Ajit Pawar-led NCP's Maharashtra president Sunil Tatkare termed Gandhi's allegations as "childish."

Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge accused the EC of "stone-walling" critical information to track culprits engaged in "mass voter deletion" in Karnataka's Aland assembly constituency, and asked who the poll body is shielding.

Asserting that Special Intensive Revision (SIR) would remove "impurities" from voters' list in Bihar, Union Home Minister Amit Shah asked BJP workers to caution people against rampant "infiltration from Bangladesh" if the INDIA bloc came to power.

Shah called upon party workers to "visit every house in the state and spread the message". *—PTI*

Nitish springs surprise, drives to Patna to meet Shah

PATNA, 18 SEPT

Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar on Thursday sprung a surprise when he drove down to a Patna hotel to meet Union Home Minister Amit Shah, who is in the state for fine-tuning the BJP's strategy for the upcoming assembly polls.

Photographs of the JD(U) supremo offering a bouquet of flowers to Shah, a former BJP president, were shared by the two leaders on their respective X handles.

Sources in both parties called it "a courtesy call".

They, however, noted that Kumar's gesture would put to speculations over his "refusal" to meet Union minister and BJP chief Jagat Prakash Nadda, who was in the city last week.

Elections are likely to be announced in the state in a few weeks, and Kumar is aiming at a fifth consecutive term in office.

Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar with Home Minister Amit Shah during a meeting in Patna *PHOTO: PTI*

The JD(U) president had assured Prime Minister Narendra Modi that he was back in the NDA for good, blaming his past dalliances with the Congress-RJD combine on advice of JD(U) colleagues.

Meanwhile, Shah left for Dehri-on-Sone to hold talks with party workers and leaders of 10 districts of the Magadh-Shahabad region.

Meanwhile, Kumar announced that the Bihar government will provide financial assistance of Rs 1,000 per month to unemployed youths who have graduate degrees for a period of two years under 'Mukhyamantri Nishchay Swayam Sahayta Bhatta Yojana'. *—PTI*

Anil Ambani chargesheeted in Rs 2,796 cr fraud

NEW DELHI, 18 SEPT

The CBI filed a chargesheet on Thursday against Anil Ambani and others over alleged fraudulent transactions between the industrialist's group companies, RCFL and RHFL, Yes Bank and firms of the bank's former CEO Rana Kapoor's family, causing a loss of Rs 2,796 crore to the bank, officials said.

The federal agency in the chargesheet said Ambani is the chairman of the Anil Dhirubhai Ambani (ADA) Group and director of Reliance Capital Limited, the holding company of RCFL and RHFL.

Besides Ambani, the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) has chargesheeted Rana Kapoor, Bindu Kapoor, Radha Kapoor, Roshni Kapoor, RCFL, RHFL (now Authum Investment and Infrastructure Limited), RAB Enterprises Private Limited, Imagine Estate Private Limited, Bliss House Private Limited, Imagine Habitat Private Limited, Imagine Residence Private Limited and Morgan Credits Private Limited under sections of the Prevention of Corruption Act and Indian Penal Code (IPC). *—PTI*

BJP's AI video on Muslims in Assam sparks row

GUWAHATI, 18 SEPT

The Assam Congress on Thursday filed a complaint with the police, alleging that the BJP uploaded AI-generated videos on social media to incite communal disturbances and promote enmity among religious groups.

The party also accused the BJP of targeting Assam Pradesh Congress Committee (APCC) President Gaurav Gogoi and Muslims by uploading the videos.

The complaint has been filed at the Dispur Police Station by APCC's Media department Chairman Bedabrata Bora against the Assam BJP President Dilip Saikia, Co-Convenor of BJP's social media cell Shekharjyoti Baishya and others for alleged criminal conspiracy, incitement to communal disturbances, promoting enmity among religious groups and violation of the model code of conduct, which is in force for the Bodoland Territorial Council (BTC) elections.

The video release by BJP on 15 September titled 'Assam without BJP' portrayed an overwhelmingly Muslim-dominated Assam, with legalised beef sales, renamed landmarks with Islamic motifs and exaggerated statistics claiming 90 per cent Muslim population, said Bora.

BJP refers to Gogoi as 'paijan' ever since Chief Minister Himanta Biswa accused him of having alleged links with Pakistan's ISI. *—PTI*

JU student's death: CCTV footage captures 40 people

KOLKATA, 18 SEPT

At least 40 people were captured on CCTV camera footage on the evening of 11 September near the pond inside Jadavpur University, where the body of a third-year English Literature student was found, a senior officer of Kolkata Police said on Thursday.

Investigators are planning to question all of them before Durga Puja, he said, adding that footage from vicinity, particularly a bathroom near the pond, has become key to case.

Additonally, amid the row surrounding the student's death, a student leader of the Students' Federation of India's (SFI), has been suspended over allegations of improper conduct with a peer during a trip to Santiniketan, SFI said in a statement. *—PTI*

Can't let LeT, JeM use Afganistan, says India

UNITED NATIONS, 18 SEPT

- India further stressed that any coherent policy to address post-conflict situation must combine incentivising positive behaviour & disincentivising harmful actions.

India has called on the international community to ensure UN-designated terror entities, including Pakistan-based Lashkar-e-Tayyiba and Jaish-e-Mohammed, as well as their facilitators, no longer exploit Afghan territory for terrorist activities.

"India is closely monitoring the security situation in Afghanistan," India's Permanent Representative to the UN Ambassador Parvathaneni Harish said.

Harish, delivering a statement at the UN Security Council meeting on Afghanistan, said that India and Afghanistan share a civilisational relationship and Delhi has a "paramount interest" in ensuring peace and stability in the war-torn country.

External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar has spoken twice with the Acting Foreign Minister of Afghanistan Amir Khan Muttaqi.

India further stressed that any coherent policy to address a post-conflict situation must combine incentivising positive behaviour and disincentivising harmful actions.

He stressed that a "business as usual" approach is only expected to maintain the status quo. *—PTI*

Remarks on Hindu beliefs must be avoided: VHP

NEW DELHI, 18 SEPT

- He said the courts are the temples of justice in which Indian society has faith and trust.

The VHP on Thursday criticised Chief Justice of India BR Gavai's comments on a plea for restoration of Lord Vishnu idol in Khajuraho, saying it would be better if such remarks mocking at beliefs of Hindu religion are avoided.

This comes after a bench headed by the CJI on 17 September dismissed the plea, calling it "publicity interest litigation".

Vishva Hindu Parishad (VHP) national president Alok Kumar said in a statement, "We feel that the Chief Justice's oral remark has mocked the beliefs of Hindu religion. It would be better to avoid such remarks." He said the courts are the temples of justice in which Indian society has faith and trust.

Meanwhile, Gavai affirmed his respect for "all religions" in the wake of online criticism his comments garnered. In his plea, Rakesh Dalal had sought replacement and consecration of the damaged idol at Javari Temple in Chhatarpur district, part of the UNESCO World Heritage Khajuraho temple complex in Madhya Pradesh. *—PTI*

'IMPORTANT FIRST STEP'

Indian national first to be deported from UK

LONDON, 18 SEPT

An Indian national who reportedly arrived in the UK illegally on a small boat across the English Channel became the first to be deported to France under a new treaty on Thursday.

The unnamed man who is said to have arrived in early August has been flown out to Paris on a commercial flight from Heathrow Airport under the so-called "one-in, one-out" deal struck recently as part of a UK-France returns treaty.

UK Home Secretary Shabana Mahmood dubbed it an "important first step" in the government's attempt to clamp down on soaring illegal migration perpetuated by people smugglers across the Channel. The deported man will be offered a paid-for voluntary return to his home country once back in France.

- The deported man will be offered a paid-for voluntary return to his home country

He would not be able to apply for asylum and could go on to face enforced deportation if he did not take up the voluntary scheme.

The development came after official Home Office figures released in August claimed that Indian nationals in detention had almost doubled in the past year, up 108 per cent. 2,715 Indians were logged as being in detention.

While further deportations are planned on flights, the first arrivals from France through the new asylum route under the reciprocal scheme are expected in the UK in the coming days.

In return, UK will accept an equal number of migrants through a newly established safe and legal route, subject to what the Home Office termed as "rigorous documentation, eligibility, and security checks". *—PTI*

Palaniswami said that a year after AIADMK revived its ties with BJP, Dhanikaran said his party was not in the alliance *PHOTO: PTI*

No talks with Shah on AIADMK's matters, says EPS

SALEM, 18 SEPT

AIADMK General Secretary Edappadi K Palaniswami on Thursday asserted that Union Home Minister Amit Shah did not intervene in the internal issues of his party and nothing related to intra-party matters was discussed with him in the national capital.

When that was made pretty months ago, fresh claims on the issue should not be taken up or entertained, he said.

Senior leader KA Sengottaiyan had demanded that expelled leaders be taken back into the party.

Hitting out at Dhinakaran, the AIADMK chief said only he entered the AIADMK with a mask and was eventually expelled from the party in 2011 by late party supremo J Jayalalithaa.

Accusing Dhinakaran of having "ulterior motive", the LoP, however, said he was not clear about the nature of such motives, which has surfaced in his comments after the AIADMK sought conferment of Bharat Ratna posthumously on freedom fighter Pasumpon U Muthramalinga Thevar.

Also, Palaniswami said that a week after the AIADMK revived its ties with the BJP this year, TTV Dhinakaran said that his party was not in the AIADMK alliance. However, Dhinakaran had said at that time that the AMMK was still a part of the NDA.Amma Makkal Munnetra Kazhagam chief TTV Dhinakaran alleged that Palaniswami covered his face while leaving Shah's residence. *—PTI*

ED searches against Sasikala, others in bank fraud case

CHENNAI, 18 SEPT

The Enforcement Directorate on Thursday conducted searches in Chennai and Hyderabad as part of a money laundering probe into an alleged Rs 200 crore bank fraud and benami assets probe against Sasikala, a close aide of late Tamil Nadu CM J Jayalalithaa, and some others, officials said.

At least ten premises in the two cities linked to a person named GRK Reddy, related to the Marg group and an alleged benami of Sasikala, are being raided under the provisions of the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA, they said.

The probe is related to a Rs 200 crore alleged bank fraud in which the CBI had filed an FIR. *—PTI*

Bombay HC dismisses PILs on Maratha quota

MUMBAI, 18 SEPT

The Bombay High Court on Thursday said it was not inclined to hear PILs against Maharashtra government's decision to issue Kunbi caste certificates to Maratha community members for reservation, noting the petitioners were not aggrieved persons.

The court noted the aggrieved persons (people from the OBC category) have already filed four petitions in the HC. The PILs ought to be dismissed, the court said. The petitioners can file applications in the petitions filed by the aggrieved persons. The PIL petitioners have to inform what they wish to do.

The pleas claimed the government's decision was arbitrary, unconstitutional and bad in law, and deserves to be quashed. The government's decision came after activist Manoj Jarange staged an indefinite hunger strike. It issued a resolution on Hyderabad gazetteer to facilitate issuance of Kunbi caste certificates to Marathas. *—PTI*

35 kids fall sick on eating chowmein in Jharkhand

LATEHAR, 18 SEPT

At least 35 children fell ill from suspected food poisoning after eating chowmein at a village fair in Temki, Latehar district, Jharkhand, officials said on Thursday. The incident occurred on Wednesday evening during a festival organised under Sadar police station limits. The children, aged two to 15, were admitted to Sadar Hospital with vomiting, abdominal pain, and dehydration, said paediatric specialist Dr Jaiprakash. "They were brought in by ambulance between 9.30pm and 10pm. It was a case of food poisoning. Their condition is stable now," he told PTI. Authorities added that the children would soon be discharged, and the necessary procedures for their release have been initiated. *—PTI*

PHOTO: X

Tamil Nadu MLA gets bail in abduction case

NEW DELHI, 18 SEPT

The Supreme Court on Thursday granted anticipatory bail to "Poovai" Jegan Moorthy, MLA from KV Kuppam, Tamil Nadu, in an alleged abduction case. A bench of Justices Manoj Misra and Joymalya Bagchi made its June 30 order absolute, disposing of Moorthy's plea. He had appealed against a Madras High Court order rejecting his anticipatory bail. Moorthy argued the boy had been recovered and was never in his possession. The court noted that any interaction with the parties could be relevant to settling the dispute, and no custodial interrogation was necessary. The case arose from a complaint by Lakshmi, whose son was allegedly abducted and later abandoned with injuries. *—PTI*

R'than chemists to go on strike over Rs 880cr dues

JAIPUR, 18 SEPT

Chemists in Rajasthan have threatened to go on strike over alleged irregularities in the Rajasthan Government Health Scheme (RGHS) and unpaid dues. The Rajasthan Chemist Association claims nearly Rs 880 crore is pending, with over three lakh bills missing from the scheme's portal. "Despite repeated requests, the government has taken no action. Chemists have decided to strike to pressurise authorities," said association president Vivek Vijayvargiya. The association announced a statewide agitation, citing payment delays of six to seven months, despite official assurances that dues would be cleared within 21 days. Many chemists struggle to pay school fees, while several shops face closure due to mounting debt. *—PTI*

ED conducts searches against BC Jindal Group

NEW DELHI, 18 SEPT

The Enforcement Directorate (ED) on Thursday conducted searches against the B C Jindal Group of companies on charges of violation of the foreign exchange law.13 premises of the directors and officials of the group located in Delhi-NCR and Hyderabad are being searched under the provisions of the Foreign Exchange Management Act The ED is investigating suspected FEMA violations by the group entities of the company such as Jindal India Thermal Power Ltd. and Jindal India Powertech Ltd. for its overseas investments and parking of funds in their overseas entities. The business conglomerate has recorded an annual turnover of over Rs 18,000 crore and is a major player in the power sector. *—PTI*

No mercy from rains in Uttarakhand, HP

Swollen rivers cause severe erosion near banks

SHIMLA, 18 SEPT

Heavy rains continue to batter northern India, triggering widespread devastation in Uttarakhand and Himachal Pradesh, with flooding, landslides, and public anger taking centre stage.

In Uttarakhand's Chamoli district, landslides and flooding triggered by torrential rains have flattened over 30 houses across four villages in Nandanagar block. In the Mokh Valley, the swollen Moksha river caused severe erosion from Dhurma to Sera, damaging dozens of buildings. At least eight people, including four from a single family, are missing in Kuntari Lagaphali, and two more in Dhurma, officials said.

Chamoli DM Sandeep Tiwari confirmed that the road to Nandanagar has been blocked by debris. Rescue operations are being hampered by swampy conditions and continued rain. Nandan Singh, vice-president of the local Indian Red Cross, reported multiple landslide points in Kuntari Lagaphali, where torrents of mud and boulders crushed homes. Many injured residents managed to escape just in time.

The region was already vulnerable, having witnessed land subsidence in August. The recent landslides follow earlier cloudbursts in Dehradun, which killed 21 and left 17 missing.

Meanwhile, Himachal Pradesh faces its own crisis. The state Met office has issued a yellow alert for heavy rain, thunderstorms and lightning in Bilaspur, Kangra, Mandi, and Sirmaur. As of Thursday, 566 roads, including NH-3 and NH-503A, remain closed. Since the monsoon began, the state has recorded 46 cloudbursts, 98 flash floods and 145 major landslides, with 419 deaths and estimated damages of Rs 4,593 crore.

Repair and restoration work underway on the Rishikesh-Chamba-Gangotri Highway after a landslide on Thursday *PHOTO: PTI*

'Go back Kangana'

BJP MP and actor Kangana Ranaut faced public anger during a visit to flood-hit Patlikuhal in Manali. Locals shouted "Go back Kangana, you are late." *—PTI*

People try to find their way through a flooded street in Hyderabad after torrential rains on the night of 17 September *PHOTO: SCREENGRAP*

Man drowns in Hyd flooded underpass

HYDERABAD, 18 SEPT

- Sharafuddin died after being swept away by floodwaters at the Balkampet underpass. He was riding his bike at the time of the incident.

Heavy overnight showers left several areas flooded in Telangana's Hyderabad on Thursday.

Sharafuddin, a youth died after being swept away by floodwaters at the Balkampet underpass near Begumpet. He was riding his bike when he was dragged him into a submerged cellar by the gushing water.

Locals failed to rescue him.

Flash floods were reported across Secunderabad and other low-lying parts of the city. Household items were washed away in some neighbourhoods and several families were stranded.

The Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation mayor Vijayalaxmi visited affected zones to oversee relief measures.

Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy directed all departments to coordinate relief operations and clear flooded roads. Residents in low-lying areas were asked to remain indoors unless necessary.

A yellow alert was issued for Telangana on Thursday and 19 September. Light rain and thunderstorms can occur Hyderabad and several other districts over the next 48 hours. *—PTI*

Navy official found dead in Maharashtra

MUMBAI, 18 SEPT

The decomposed body of a 33-year-old Navy official, who went missing during a trek at Matheran in Maharashtra earlier this month, has been found in a gorge.

The deceased, Surajsingh Amarpalsingh Chauhan, who served as master chief, class II at Colaba, had joined duty four months ago.

Chauhan, hailing from Rajasthan, had gone for Bhivpuri-Garbett trek on 7 September.

When he did not return home and his mobile phone was also switched off, his family members approached the police. A case was registered.

The decomposed body was recovered on 15 September after a trekker alerted the police, who launched a search with the help of forest department and other agencies.

The body was sent for postmortem to a hospital in Mumbai and the report is awaited. *—PTI*

Court sets aside order gagging media on Adani

NEW DELHI, 18 SEPT

A Delhi district court on Thursday allowed a plea filed by four journalists challenging an order restraining them from publishing or circulating alleged unverified and defamatory content against Adani Enterprises Limited.

The court was hearing the appeal filed by journalists Ravi Nair, Abir Dasgupta, Ayaskanta Das and Ayush Joshi against a civil judge's September 6 order.

Acting on AEL's defamation, the civil judge directed 10 defendants, including the four journalists, to take down contentious material already published on various platforms, including websites, articles and social media posts, within a stipulated period.

Gautam Shantial Adani *PHOTO: PTI*

The district court, however, observed the civil judge should have provided an opportunity to the defendants before passing the order, pointing out that the provisions of the Civil Procedure Code (CPC) weren't kept in mind.

"The impugned order is not sustainable. I allow the appeal and set aside the impugned order without any finding on the merits of the case," Judge Aggarwal said.

The matter was remanded to a court to decide it afresh after hearing both sides.

Meanwhile, another court reserved its order on the appeal filed by journalist Paranjoy Guha Thakurta who sought a similar relief.

The defendants in the case are Guha Thakurta, Nair, Dasgupta, Das, Joshi, Bob Brown Foundation, Dreamscape Network International Private Limited, Getup Limited, Domain Directors Private Limited trading as Instra and John Doe parties. *—PTI*

India, US eye moon missions

HOUSTON, 18 SEPT

India and the US signalled the beginning of a new phase of space partnership at a special event hosted by the Embassy of India in Washington DC, with officials and astronauts highlighting how decades of cooperation are now paving the way for missions to the moon and mars.

An event, titled "India-USA Space Collaboration: The Frontiers of a Futuristic Partnership", was held at India House,Ambassador of India to the United States, Vinay Kwatra, described the partnership as "a dynamic platform for advancing scientific exploration, technology development and commercial cooperation."Karen St Germain, director of NASA's Earth Science Division called the NISAR mission a "model of international collaboration." Pooling expertise can accelerate new findings. *—PTI*

The physically challenged Gangaram (pic) was sleeping at his tea stall when he was hit by the police control room van on Thursday *PHOTO: ANI*

'Drunk' cop's van crushes man to death in Delhi

NEW DELHI, 18 SEPT

A tea seller was killed after a police control room van rammed into his roadside stall in central Delhi's Mandir Marg area on Thursday morning, with locals alleging the cops inside the vehicle to be drunk.

The physically challenged victim, identified as Gangaram, 55 was sleeping at his tea shop when the incident took place around 5 am.

Locals claimed that the van mounted a roadside ramp and crushed him to death.

His son lives with him in Delhi, while his wife resides in Gonda in Uttar Pradesh.

An assistant sub-inspector and a constable have been suspended. .A case was registered. The body was sent for autopsy. *—Agencies*

Cleared of water resource misuse allegations: Vantara

NEW DELHI, 18 SEPT

The Supreme Court-appointed special investigation team (SIT) has found that allegations of misuse of water resources and carbon credits against Vantara are "entirely baseless", the zoological rescue and rehabilitation centre has said in a statement.

The court had accepted the SIT's report, which found no legal violations in Vantara's operations in Jamnagar in Gujarat.

The SIT cleared Vantara, run by Reliance Foundation, of all major allegations, including claims that it was acquiring animals to profit from carbon credits, the statement said. The court also further clarified that there is no recognised domestic or international framework that awards carbon credits for the rescue, housing, or upkeep of wild animals, it added.

"The SIT's detailed review of the centre's operations and funding confirmed that the allegations were entirely baseless, lacking any factual or legal foundation, and appeared exaggerated to attract attention," Vantara said.

"Vantara has neither applied for nor received any such credits, and its work is funded entirely through philanthropic means," it added. The top court had heard two PILs alleging irregularities against Vantara on the basis of reports in the media and social media besides complaints from NGOs and wildlife organisations. *—PTI*

Malegaon blast: 7 acquitted get notice

Sumeer Kulkarni; Major (rtd) Ramesh Upadhyay; Lt Col Prasad Purohit; BJP MP Pragya Thakur; Ajay Rahirkar. The seven were acquitted in the Malegaon blast *PHOTO: PTI*

MUMBAI, 18 SEPT

The Bombay High Court on Thursday issued notices to the seven persons acquitted in the 2008 Malegaon blast case, on an appeal filed by the family members of the victims.

The court also issued notices to the prosecution -- National Investigation Agency (NIA) and the Maharashtra government.

The HC was hearing an appeal filed by the family members of the six victims of the blast against the acquittal judgment.

The appeal challenged a special NIA court judgment acquitting the seven accused in the case, including former BJP MP Pragya Singh Thakur and Lt Col Prasad Purohit.

The appeal claimed that a faulty investigation could be the grounds for acquitting the accused. As the conspiracy was hatched in secrecy and there could not be direct evidence of it.

On September 29, 2008, an explosive device went off in Malegaon in Maharashtra's Nashik district, killing six persons and injuring 101 others.It claimed the NIA diluted the allegations against the accused persons. *—PTI*

Power sector's CO2 emissions fell by 1% in 50 yrs

NEW DELHI, 18 SEPT

India's carbon dioxide emissions from the power sector fell by 1 per cent year-on-year in the first half of 2025 and by 0.2 per cent over the past 12 months, only the second decline in nearly five decades, a new analysis showed on Thursday.

The study, conducted by the Centre for Research on Energy and Clean Air (CREA) for UK-based Carbon Brief, said India has contributed nearly two-fifths of the global energy sector emissions growth since 2019.In 2024, India accounted for 8 per cent of the global energy CO2 emissions and per capita emissions far below the global average. Power generation rose by 9 terawatt hours in 2025. *—PTI*

ED RAIDS MULTIPLE STATES IN ANDHRA 'LIQUOR' SCAM

HYDERABAD/ AMRAVATI

The Enforcement Directorate (ED) on Thursday conducted searches in multiple states as part of its money laundering investigation into an alleged Rs 3,500 crore liquor scam in Andhra Pradesh that took place during the previous YSRCP regime.

20 locations across Telangana, Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, Karnataka and Delhi-NCR linked to entities and individuals who allegedly facilitated payment of kickbacks were searched.

The police filed three chargesheets in the case and among the prominent arrestees is YSRCP Lok Sabha MP PV Midhun Reddy.

The police alleged in its chargesheet that former chief minister and YSRCP leader YS Jagan Mohan Reddy was one of the recipients of kickbacks averaging Rs 50-Rs 60 crore per month.

ED also conducted searches at 13 premises of the BC Jindal Group of companies in Delhi-NCR and Hyderabad on charges of violation of the foreign exchange law. *—PTI*

PUBERTY WOES

Climate change impacts periods in girls: Study

NEW DELHI, 18 SEPT

Climate change could be affecting when girls get their first periods, with higher humidity linked with an earlier onset and higher temperatures with a delayed one, according to a study.

Researchers from institutes in Bangladesh, including the North South University, analysed data gathered through 'Demographic and Health Surveys' (DHS) during 1992-93 and 2019-21, along with climate data from NASA.

Over 23,000 responses from 1992 and 45,300 from 2019 were analysed.

Results of the analysis, published in the journal PLOS Global Public Health, showed that girls across most states in India were starting to menstruate at a younger age, except those in Maharashtra, where the onset of periods among girls was found to be delayed.

The researchers said that the study aims to understand how climate change and demographic factors shape manarche timing *PHOTO: FREEPIK*

The authors wrote, "This study aim to understand how climate change and demographic factors have shaped menarche timing."

The age of menarche -- start of menstruation -- is changing in girls across the world, especially in the second half of the 20th century.

Previous studies have attributed the trend to varied factors -- environmental ones include climate change and air pollution, while others are related to obesity, such as BMI.

The link between higher temperatures and a delayed onset of periods among girls in Maharashtra could reflect a physiological stress due to prolonged exposure to heat, which can impact how hormones get regulated and delay puberty, the researchers said.

They called for continued monitoring of climate impacts on health, essential for mitigating the effects of environmental changes on menarche timing. *—PTI*

FRANCE STANDS UP

Striking rail workers light flares outside France's Economics Ministry in Paris as mass protests erupt nationwide against proposed budget cuts and austerity measures. Called by major trade unions, the demonstrations come as new Prime Minister Sébastien Lecornu consults on curbing France's soaring debt. Unions demand the reversal of social welfare freezes and continue to oppose President Macron's pension reform. Disruptions hit transport, hospitals, and schools, with 80,000 security personnel deployed to prevent violence and potential sabotage ***PHOTO: PTI***

Rare but deadly amoeba is claiming lives in Kerala

The mother of a nine-year-old girl who died after contracting the so-called "brain-eating amoeba" says she is still struggling to comprehend the loss.

"I cannot believe my daughter is gone," a sobbing mother said, adding that there was no clear information from health authorities on how the child became infected.

The girl, hailing from Kozhikode, is among those who have succumbed in recent months to Primary Amoebic Meningoencephalitis, a rare but almost always fatal brain infection caused by Naegleria fowleri.

Kerala has been grappling with a rare but deadly disease that has claimed the lives of 19 people in recent months.

The culprit is a microscopic parasite known as Naegleria fowleri, more commonly called the "brain-eating amoeba", which causes a condition known as Primary Amoebic Meningoencephalitis, or PAM.

The infection is almost always fatal, killing more than 98 per cent of those who contract it. Over 70 cases have been reported in the state this year.

The amoeba is found in warm freshwater such as ponds, lakes, rivers and poorly maintained swimming pools.

According to health officials, it does not cause illness when swallowed, but when water enters the nose the parasite can migrate through the nasal passages into the brain, where it causes devastating inflammation and destruction of tissue.

The disease progresses very quickly.

"What starts as a fever, headache, nausea and stiff neck soon leads to confusion, seizures and coma. Death usually occurs within one to two weeks," according to a health official.

Doctors say it is often mistaken for bacterial meningitis, and by the time the real cause is recognised it is too late to save the patient.

Kerala Health Minister Veena George told the State Assembly on Wednesday that amoebae exist in most water sources, though only some types are dangerous.

The amoeba is found in ponds, lakes, rivers and swimming pools. When water enters the nose, the parasite can migrate through the nasal passages into the brain, where it destroys the tissues ***PHOTO: FREEPIK***

She pointed out that the first case of PAM in the state was reported in 2016, and since then the government has been working on guidelines to help doctors respond more quickly.

Until recently, the tests needed to confirm the disease were only available at laboratories in Chandigarh and Puducherry, but now Kerala has established its own diagnostic facilities.

Health authorities have directed hospitals to suspect PAM in any patient with sudden meningitis-like symptoms and a recent history of contact with freshwater.

Microbiologists are to be alerted immediately so that cerebrospinal fluid samples can be checked under the microscope or confirmed by PCR testing.

Health officials said that the treatment remains extremely difficult.

There is no single drug that can cure PAM, and survivors worldwide are very few.

Patients who have made it through were treated with a combination of powerful medicines such as amphotericin B, miltefosine and rifampicin, together with therapies to reduce the dangerous brain swelling that accompanies the disease.

In Kerala, doctors now form multi-disciplinary teams to handle confirmed cases, involving neurologists, paediatricians, infectious disease specialists and critical care experts.

Though extremely rare, the disease has sparked anxiety because of its high death rate.

Experts stress that prevention is the best defence.

People are advised not to swim or dive in stagnant or poorly maintained freshwater bodies during the hot season. If swimming is unavoidable, nose clips can reduce the risk of water entering the nostrils.

Children should not play with hoses or sprinklers in a way that forces water up the nose, and garden hoses should be flushed before use.

Daily cleaning of paddling pools, proper chlorination of swimming pools and using only boiled or filtered water for nasal rinsing are also recommended.

Scientists warn that climate change may increase the risk of PAM.

The amoeba thrives in warm water and feeds on bacteria that flourish at higher temperatures. Hotter summers may both expand the parasite's range and drive more people to seek relief in lakes and rivers, raising the chances of exposure.

After the Nipah outbreak in Kozhikode in 2023, Kerala made it a policy to report and investigate every instance of brain fever, including rare infections like those caused by amoeba. *—PTI*

SALAR ساڈہ

'Climate health risks to cost globe Rs 131 lakh cr'

Climate-related health risks can cost the global economy at least USD 1.5 trillion (over Rs 131 lakh crore) in lost productivity in the next 25 years due to rising illness and labour shortages across key sectors, a new study showed on Thursday.

The World Economic Forum report, developed in collaboration with Boston Consulting Group, assessed climate-driven health impacts in four of the most affected economic sectors: food and agriculture; the built environment; health and healthcare; and insurance.

The USD 1.5 trillion estimate reflects losses in only the first three sectors, under a mid-range scenario, suggesting the burden on the global economy could be far higher, it said.

The study encourages companies to act now to protect workforce health, build operational resilience and safeguard productivity before the costs of climate adaptation become unmanageable.

The findings highlighted that adapting to extreme heat, infectious diseases and other health risks accelerating due to climate change is now a strategic business imperative.

"We are entering an era in which protecting worker health is proving essential to business continuity and long-term resilience," said Eric White, Head of Climate Resilience, World Economic Forum.

"Every year we delay embedding resilience into business decisions, the risks to human health and productivity climb and the costs of adaptation rise," White added.

Alongside shared disruptions, the analysis also outlined sector-specific vulnerabilities. In food and agriculture, climate health impacts could lead to USD 740 billion in lost output, triggering serious consequences for global food security, according to the WEF, a Geneva-based international organisation for public-private partnership.

In the built environment sector, climate health impacts are projected to result in productivity losses of USD 570 billion.

PHOTO: FREEPIK

The health and healthcare sector stands to lose USD 200 billion in productivity due to workforce climate health issues, while rising climate-driven disease rates among the wider population could compound demand pressures. The insurance industry, meanwhile, is projected to experience a sharp rise in climate health claims.

"As temperatures rise, millions of jobs become more dangerous – or disappear entirely – pushing families deeper into poverty and changing where and how people can live and thrive," said Naveen Rao, Vice-President for Health, Rockefeller Foundation, which supported this research.

However, the report also indicated that companies investing early in climate health adaptation can benefit beyond risk mitigation, unlocking new opportunities for innovation and growth while meeting emerging market needs.

Each sector is uniquely positioned to develop and scale solutions to emerging climate health challenges. From climate-resilient crops that protect food systems, heat-stable medications that expand medicine availability, cooling technologies that keep construction workers safe and new insurance models protecting communities against climate health shocks, examples of innovation are already taking shape.

"Momentum on health adaptation is building, but financing and implementation are still far below what's needed," said Elia Tziambazis, Managing Director and Partner, BCG.

The report sourced health data from scientific literature and employment data, and economic cost from the International Labour Organisation and World Bank data.

The report pointed out that a global shift to health resilience must be underpinned by supportive policies, interoperable climate health data systems and innovative financing to mobilise capital.

The findings, published ahead of the World Economic Forum's Sustainable Development Impact Meetings 2025, come as preparations intensify for COP30 in Belem, Brazil.

This year's climate negotiations are set to bring health adaptation to the forefront of the global climate agenda, signalling a unique opportunity to align private sector innovation with policy action. *—PTI*

In the built environment sector, climate health impacts are projected to result in productivity losses of USD 570 billion ***PHOTO: FREEPIK***

LETTERS

write to us at salarenglishdigital@gmail.com

Pope Leo plans to keep Francis' reforms but avoid bigger changes

In his first interview since becoming the head of the Roman Catholic Church, Pope Leo XIV has laid out a vision of continuity with key policies of his predecessor, Pope Francis, while steering clear of major changes to Church teaching.

The interview, published on Thursday by Vatican correspondent Elise Ann Allen for Crux, accompanies the release of a new biography in Peru, where Pope Leo spent many years as a bishop.

At 70, Pope Leo becomes the first American to lead the Catholic Church. Raised in Chicago, he brings a more reserved style than Francis, who led the Church for 12 years and was known for outspoken remarks on global politics.

"I don't plan to get involved in partisan politics," Leo said. "There are significant issues that can be raised, but it would be impossible for the pope to get involved in individual countries around the world."

However, Leo made it clear he would not shy away from raising concerns on issues central to Church teaching, including migration, human dignity, and inclusion.

MIGRATION, TRUMP AND US POLITICS

Leo revealed he had not yet spoken with US President Donald Trump but had met Vice President JD Vance in May, where he raised concerns over the administration's crackdown on migrants. "I talked about human dignity and how important that is for all people, wherever you're born," he said.

He also praised Pope Francis' letter rebuking mass deportation plans, applauding US bishops for showing "courage" in confronting the Trump administration.

While emphasising that he is not a Trump supporter, Leo acknowledged the global influence of the United States. "Sometimes decisions are made more based on economics than on human dignity... but we must continue to raise these questions."

He added that he and his brother, Luis Prevost — described as a "MAGA-type" and a Trump ally — are "in different places."

WELCOMING LGBTQ+ CATHOLICS

Pope Leo reaffirmed Pope Francis' open message to LGBTQ+ Catholics, "todos, todos, todos", but downplayed expectations of doctrinal change.

"Everyone's invited in... because they are a son or daughter of God," he said, noting that Church doctrine on sexuality is unlikely to change in the near future.

At 70, Pope Leo is the first American to lead the Catholic Church. Raised in Chicago, he brings a more reserved style than Francis ***PHOTO: PTI***

The Catholic Church continues to teach that homosexual activity is "intrinsically disordered," though it affirms the dignity and respect owed to all individuals.

Leo stressed that shifting attitudes must come before any doctrinal reconsideration.

WOMEN'S ROLES

On the contentious issue of women's ordination, Leo expressed openness to dialogue but no intention of changing Church teaching. "I am certainly willing to continue to listen to people," he said, referencing an ongoing Vatican study on the role of women as deacons. However, he stood firm: "At the moment, I don't have an intention of changing the teaching." He did pledge to continue the push to appoint women to leadership roles within the Vatican and beyond, echoing a priority of his predecessor.

VATICAN-CHINA TIES

Pope Leo signalled no immediate change to the Vatican's controversial 2018 accord with Beijing on bishop appointments, which aimed to bridge the divide between China's state-sanctioned Catholic Church and the underground church loyal to Rome.

POPE'S 1ST INTERVIEW

"I in no way pretend to be wiser or more experienced than those who have come before me," Leo said. He is currently engaging with Chinese Catholics "on both sides" to better understand the issue, which has drawn criticism that the Vatican has abandoned underground Catholics in favour of diplomatic cooperation.

SEXUAL ABUSE CRISIS

Leo described the clergy sexual abuse crisis as "a real crisis" that is far from resolved. "The Church still hasn't found a way to help victims heal," he said. While affirming that "well over 90 per cent" of victims are truthful, he also stressed the need to protect the rights of accused priests, noting some have been falsely accused.

He insisted the issue must not become the Church's defining feature. "It cannot become the centre focus of the Church," he said. Though Leo played a key role in helping victims of an abusive religious group in Peru find justice, a US victim advocacy group has criticised him for not doing enough in other Peruvian cases — a point he did not address directly.

GAZA CRISIS

Asked about the worsening crisis in Gaza, Pope Leo expressed "great concern" but avoided repeating Pope Francis' 2024 suggestion that Israel may be committing genocide. "The word genocide is being thrown around more and more," he said, adding that the Holy See cannot make such a declaration "at this time."

His more cautious diplomatic tone contrasts with Francis' often blunt assessments of international conflicts.

VATICAN FINANCES: A REBUILDING PHASE

Leo also addressed the Vatican's financial struggles, including a €50–60 million annual deficit and a €1 billion pension shortfall.

However, he offered reassurance: "It is not the crisis that people have been led to believe."

While insisting he is not "losing sleep over it," Leo said the Vatican must continue to work toward stability and transparency. *—PTI*

TRUMP, STARMER INK TRADE PACT

Trump tells Starmer to use military if needed to control immigration in the UK

LONDON, 18 SEPT

US President Donald Trump on Thursday signed what he called a historic agreement on science and technology with Britain.

British Prime Keir Starmer said the new UK-US Tech Prosperity Deal would make "250 billion pounds flowing both ways across the Atlantic. It is the biggest investment package of its kind in British history."

Trump and Starmer held a roundtable with business leaders as they signed the deal.

The deal focuses heavily on AI investment, with Starmer announcing significant investments from companies including Nvidia, Nscale, OpenAI, Google, and Salesforce that would create "cutting-edge British jobs for years to come."

British Prime Minister Keir Starmer with US President Donald Trump **PHOTO: X**

At a joint press conference, Starmer referred to the American President as "my friend, our friend" and spoke of "leaders who respect each other and leaders who genuinely like each other."

Trump added that, "We're forever joined, and we are forever friends, and we will always be friends".

Trump said that UK's plan to recognise a Palestinian state was "one of the few disagreements" they had.

On the Russia-Ukraine war Trump said, "You know, it doesn't affect the US... unless you end up in a world war over this thing, you could".

Trump said that he told Starmer to "use the military if needed" to control the immigration situation in the UK. *—Agencies*

Britain launched a charm offensive for US President Donald Trump and First Lady Melania Trump. The Trumps dined with Queen Camilla and King Charles III in Windsor Castle. UK Prime Minister Keir Starmer called Trump his 'friend' and said they were leaders who respected each other. Trump reciprocated, having earlier called Charles 'a great gentleman, a great king' **PHOTO: PTI**

TRUMP TO DESIGNATE ANTIFA A TERRORIST ORG

WASHINGTON, 18 SEPT

Trump said early Thursday that he plans to designate Antifa as a "major terrorist organisation."

Trump made the announcement in a social media post. He called Antifa a "SICK, DANGEROUS, RADICAL LEFT DISASTER." He also said he will be "strongly recommending" that funders of Antifa be investigated.

The designation matters because it enables the Justice Department to prosecute those who give material support to entities on that list even if that support does not result in violence.

Antifa is a domestic entity and, as such, is not a candidate for inclusion on the State Department's list of foreign terror organisations.

There is no domestic equivalent to that list in part because of broad First Amendment protections enjoyed by organisations operating within the United States. And despite periodic calls, particularly after mass shootings by white supremacists, to establish a domestic terrorism law, no singular statute now exists. *—PTI*

What is Antifa?

Antifa, short for "anti-fascists," is an umbrella term for far-left-leaning militant groups and is not a singular entity. They consist of groups that resist fascists and neo-Nazis, especially at demonstrations.

Trump shares a moment with Princess Kate during King Charles speech in Windsor Castle **PHOTO: PTI**

Pollish President Donald Tusk with Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy **PHOTO: PTI**

POLAND, UKRAINE MEET OVER RUSSIAN DRONES

KYIV, 18 SEPT

Poland's Defence Chief travelled to Kyiv on Thursday in search of Ukrainian help in developing his country's drone warfare capabilities, just over a week after Russian drones entered Polish airspace and exposed NATO's vulnerability to drone warfare.

"We will be signing an agreement concerning cooperation between the (defense) ministries, but also acquiring capabilities when it comes to operating drones," Polish Defense Minister Wladyslaw Kosiniak-Kamysz said in comments published on the website of the Polish Ministry of Defence.

Drones used for defence and attack have taken a central battlefield role in the more than three years since Russia invaded Ukraine, transforming how wars are waged, and countries are keen to master the new and quickly developing battlefield technology.

Last week's Russian incursion, which caused NATO to send fighter jets to shoot down the drones, heightened tensions in eastern Europe. The war between Russia and Ukraine has continued despite months of U.S. efforts to stop it, including a US-Russia summit meeting in Alaska.

Meanwhile, Ukraine's air defences shot down or jammed 48 out of 75 Russian drones launched at the country overnight, the air force said Thursday. *—PTI*

Bangladesh's EC bans Hasina from voting

DHAKA, 18 SEPT

Bangladesh's Election Commission has "locked" the national identity card of ousted Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, preventing her from voting in next February's general election. EC Secretary Akhtar Ahmed said anyone with a locked NID card cannot vote from abroad. Local media reported that cards belonging to Hasina's sister Sheikh Rehana, her children, and other close relatives have also been blocked. Hasina's Awami League government was overthrown on 5 August, 2024 after a student-led uprising forced her to flee to India. *—PTI*

Shariff's trips to the Gulf pay dividends

ISLAMABAD, 18 SEPT

Pakistan and Saudi Arabia's new "strategic mutual defence" agreement came during Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif' third visit to the Gulf region within a week. He earlier visited Qatar twice, on Thursday and Monday, to express solidarity with Doha following Israel's attack on the Qatar and to attend an emergency meeting of Arab-Islamic nations on the issue.

At the meet, Egypt pressed for the creation of an "Arab NATO", something that Pakistan has also gunned for.

In a post on social media, Sharif on Thursday said his talks with talks with Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman "covered a wide range of issues, reviewing regional challenges and enhancing bilateral cooperation".

Sharif was accompanied by Army Chief Asim Munir, Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar, Defence Minister Khawaja Asif, Finance Minister Muhammad Aurangzeb, Information Minister Attaullah Tarar, Environment Minister Musadik Malik and Special Assistant Tariq Fatemi.

In response, India said that it would "study" the implications of the deal, which comes four months after the four-day conflict between New Delhi and Islamabad.

External Affairs Ministry spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal said New Delhi remains committed to protecting India's national interests and ensuring "comprehensive national security in all domains".

—Salar News with Agencies

Pakistani PM Shehbaz Sharif embraces Saudi Arabia's Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman after signing a joint defense pact in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia **PHOTO: PTI**

Pak, China ask UN to designate BLA as terrorist

Pakistan and China have submitted a joint bid at the UN Security Council to designate the Balochistan Liberation Army (BLA) and its Majeed Brigade as a terrorist entity under the Council's 1267 Al Qaeda Sanctions Committee.

Displaced Palestinians flee Gaza City by foot and vehicles, carrying their belongings along the coastal road toward southern Gaza **PHOTO: PTI**

ISRAEL CONTINUES ATTACKING GAZA; BOMBS LEBANON

JERUSALEM, 18 SEPT

Palestinians continued to evacuate Gaza City after Israel's ground invasion, while the IDF also attacked "Hamas' terror infrastructure" in Lebanon.

Hospital sources say the number of Palestinians killed in Gaza has risen to 42 since dawn, Al Jazeera reported.

Meanwhile, Lebanon's National News Agency reports that an Israeli strike has just targeted the town of Kfar Tebnit.

Separately, two missiles struck residential homes at risk of collapse in the town of Meiss el-Jabal, also in southern Lebanon.

There were no reports of casualties, at the time of publishing.

Meanwhile, Hamas has issued a statement urging worldwide protests on Friday, Saturday and Sunday to demand an end to Israel's blockade that has unleashed famine in Gaza. *—Agencies*

> **There is a business plan.... that is on President Trump's desk (about) how this thing turns into a real estate bonanza. I have started negotiations with the Americans.... We've done the demolition, the first stage.... Now we need to build.... We need to decide how to divide the percentage from land marketing later in Gaza.**
>
> —Bezalel Smotrich, Israeli Finance Minister

Taliban internet ban widens across Afghan

JALALABAD, 18 SEPT

The Taliban's campaign to "prevent immorality" is extending across Afghanistan, with a growing number of provinces losing fiber-optic internet access after the country's leader ordered a complete ban on the technology.

It is the first such prohibition since the Taliban regained power in August 2021 and has cut government departments, businesses, public institutions and private homes off from Wi-Fi connections. Mobile internet remains operational, with officials insisting "alternatives" are being sought for essential needs.

Balkh province confirmed the suspension on Tuesday, with widespread disruption reported in Baghlan, Badakhshan, Kunduz, Nangarhar and Takhar later in the week. Officials, including Nangarhar's culture director Siddiqullah Quraishi and the governor's office in Kunduz, acknowledged the order. *—PTI*

China's defence chief threatens Taiwan, external forces

TAIPEI, 18 SEPT

China's Defence Minister Dong Jun has renewed threats to bring self-ruled Taiwan under Beijing's control, as he opened the Beijing Xiangshan Forum, an annual security conference showcasing China's regional leadership. Addressing an audience of international military officials on Thursday, Dong described the "restoration" of Taiwan to China as "an integral part of the post-war international order" and vowed to prevent any separatist moves or "external military interference".

Beijing considers Taiwan, a democracy of 23M people governed separately since 1949, to be a breakaway province and has not ruled out using force to assert its claim. Chinese warships and aircraft regularly operate near the island as part of ongoing pressure. *—PTI*

NYT, TMZ get clean chit over report on tribe's porn addiction

LOS ANGELES, 18 SEPT

A California judge has dismissed a lawsuit filed by an Indigenous tribe in the Brazilian Amazon against The New York Times and TMZ that claimed the newspaper's reporting on the tribe's first exposure to the internet led to its members being widely portrayed as technology-addled and addicted to pornography.

The suit was filed in May by the Marubo Tribe of the Javari Valley, a sovereign community of about 2,000 people in the Amazon rainforest.

Los Angeles County Superior Court Judge Tiana J Murillo on Tuesday sided with the Times, whose lawyers argued Monday that its coverage last year was protected by free speech.

The suit claimed stories by TMZ and Yahoo amplified and sensationalised the Times' reporting and smeared the tribe in the process. Yahoo was dismissed as a defendant earlier this month.

Murillo wrote that though some may "reasonably perceive" the reporting as "insensitive.... or reflecting a lack of respect, the Court does not determine which of these characterisations is most apt."

The lawsuit had sought at least $180 million, including both general and punitive damages, from each of the defendants. *—PTI*

AND THEN THERE WERE TWO

Kimmel's show dropped over remarks on Kirk

NEW YORK, 18 SEPT

ABC suspended Jimmy Kimmel's late-night show indefinitely beginning Wednesday after comments that he made about Charlie Kirk's death.

Kimmel, the veteran late-night comic, made several comments about the reaction to Kirk's assassination on 'Jimmy Kimmel Live!' Monday and Tuesday nights, including that "many in MAGA land are working very hard to capitalise on the murder of Charlie Kirk."

Kimmel said that "we hit some new lows over the weekend with the MAGA gang desperately trying to characterise this kid who murdered Charlie Kirk as anything other than one of them and doing everything they can to score political points from it."

> **That leaves Jimmy (Fallon) and Seth (Meyers), two total losers, on Fake News NBC.... Do it NBC!!!**
>
> —Donald Trump, US President

ABC, which has aired Kimmel's late-night show since 2003, moved swiftly after Nexstar Communications Group said it would pull the show starting Wednesday. Kimmel's comments about Kirk's death "are offensive and insensitive at a critical time in our national political discourse," said Andrew Alford, President of Nexstar's broadcasting division. Nexstar operates 23 ABC affiliates.

Kimmel said that Trump's response to Kirk's death "is not how an adult grieves the murder of someone he called a friend. This is how a 4-year-old mourns a goldfish." He also said that FBI Chief Kash Patel has handled the investigation "like a kid who didn't read the book, Bsing his way through an oral report."

There was no immediate comment from Kimmel, whose contract ends in May 2026. ABC's statement did not cite a reason for why his show was pre-emptio.

In July, after CBS cancelled 'The Late Show With Stephen Colbert,' President Donald Trump wrote on his social media platform: "I absolutely love that Colbert got fired.... I hear Jimmy Kimmel is next."

Like Colbert, Kimmel has been consistently critical of Trump and many of his policies. *—PTI*

Gold declines by Rs 600 to Rs 1.13 lakh/10g

NEW DELHI, 18 SEPT

Gold prices declined Rs 600 to Rs 1,13,200 per 10g in the national capital on Thursday weighed down by muted local demand, according to the All India Sarafa Association. In the previous trade, gold of 99.9 per cent purity had closed at Rs 1,13,800 per 10g. Similarly, gold of 99.5 per cent purity also slipped by Rs 500 to Rs 1,12,800 per 10g (inclusive of all taxes) from Rs 1,13,300 per 10g in the previous session. Silver had dropped Rs 1,670 to Rs 1,31,200 per kg in the previous session. Spot gold was trading 0.23 per cent higher at USD 3,668.33 per ounce after scaling an all-time high of USD 3,707.70 per ounce on Wednesday. Spot silver advanced 0.55 per cent to USD 41.90 per ounce. *—PTI*

Rupee falls by 35P, closes at 88.13 against USD

MUMBAI, 18 SEPT

The rupee depreciated 35 paise to close at 88.20 against the US dollar on Thursday, as a strengthening greenback against major crosses overseas sapped investors' risk appetite amid global trade uncertainties. The domestic unit remained under pressure on worries over US tariffs on India and sustained foreign fund outflows, forex traders said. Traders also assessed the US Fed's indication that it will steadily lower borrowing costs for the rest of the year, they added. At the interbank foreign exchange, the rupee opened at 87.93 against the US dollar and touched an intra-day low of 88.16 before ending the session at 88.20, down 35 paise from its previous close. Meanwhile, the dollar index rose 0.02 per cent to 96.89. *—PTI*

PHOTO: X

Production paused at Hindalco's NY plant due to fire

NEW DELHI, 18 SEPT

Hindalco Industries on Thursday said production at its plant in New York has been halted following a fire accident. The company added that it is investigating the cause of the fire and determining the impact on its operations. In a filing to BSE, Hindalco Industries said, "There was a fire incident at the Novelis Plant in Oswego, New York, on 16 September, 2025, at around 10pm (EDT) (17 September, 2025, at 7.30am IST)." "The plant is insured for property damage and business interruption losses related to such events, subject to deductibles and policy limits," the company said, adding that further updates will be provided in due course. Novelis is a leading producer of flat-rolled aluminum products and a recycler of aluminum. *—PTI*

CBIC notifies changes in annual return form GSTR-9

NEW DELHI, 18 SEPT

The CBIC has notified changes to the annual GST return form GSTR-9, making the reporting of Input Tax Credit (ITC) more comprehensive. The Central Board of Indirect Taxes and Customs (CBIC) on 17 September notified changes to the Central GST (CGST) rules, which will come into effect on 22 September and apply to annual returns filed for the 2024-25 fiscal. GST registered Taxpayers with aggregate turnover above Rs 2 crore are required to file GSTR-9. Professionals and corporates will need to wait for the revised forms and utilities from GSTN before implementing these changes in practice. Following the change, taxpayers and professionals to undertake deeper reconciliations of GSTR-3B, GSTR-2B, and financial accounts. *—PTI*

Sensex closes above 83,000; Nifty up 93 pts

The market sentiment bolstered primarily by US Fed rate cut

MUMBAI, 18 SEPT

PHOTO: FREEPIK

Stock markets advanced for the third consecutive day on Thursday, with the benchmark Sensex gaining 320 points to close above 83,000 level after the US Federal Reserve cut its key interest rate by 25 basis points and signalled the possibility of two additional rate reductions this year.

The 30-share BSE Sensex rallied 320.25 points or 0.39 per cent to settle at 83,013.96. During the day, it jumped 447.5 points or 0.54 per cent to 83,141.21.

The 50-share NSE Nifty climbed 93.35 points or 0.37 per cent to 25,423.60.

Shares of pharma, IT and financial companies edged higher while realty and energy stocks ended on a muted note.

The market sentiment was bolstered primarily by the US Federal Reserve's rate cut, which boosted risk sentiment globally, analysts said.

Among Sensex firms, Zomato-owner Eternal rose the most by 2.96 per cent on positive bets by brokerages. Sun Pharma, Infosys and HDFC Bank rose more than 1 per cent. HCL Tech, Hindustan Unilever, Power Grid, ITC and Adani Ports were also among the gainers.

Tata Motors emerged as the biggest loser among Sensex shares, dropping by 1.13 per cent. Trent, Bajaj Finance and Asian Paints were among the laggards.

The BSE midcap gauge went up by 0.36 per cent while smallcap index ended flat, marginally lower by 0.01 per cent.

Capital Goods, services, industrials, energy and commodities were the laggards.

As many as 2,182 stocks advanced while 1,993 declined and 167 remained unchanged on the BSE.

In Asian markets, South Korea's Kospi and Japan's Nikkei 225 index settled over 1 per cent higher while Shanghai's SSE Composite index and Hong Kong's Hang Seng ended more than 1 per cent lower.

Markets in Europe were trading significantly higher. US markets ended on a mixed note on Wednesday.

Global oil benchmark Brent crude dipped 0.56 per cent to USD 67.57 a barrel. *—PTI*

'LEFT WITH NO CHOICE'

Gameskraft to fire 120 staffers after online gaming ban

NEW DELHI, 18 SEPT

PHOTO: PTI

Online gaming firm Gameskraft on Thursday said it is laying off 120 employees as it navigates new regulatory landscape post the passage of the Online Gaming Bill, 2025.

The implications of this legislation are complex, far-reaching, and have had an immediate and profound impact on the sector and Gameskraft, the company said in a statement.

"The current regulatory landscape has made us completely stop our business and has left us with no choice but to initiate a company-wide restructuring.

"After careful deliberation, as part of this restructuring, we will be, as of now, letting go of about 120 Krafters across teams and functions, a decision we make with a very heavy heart. As the business continues to evolve in response to external realities, further structural changes may be required," it said. Gameskraft will stand by all impacted employees as per their employment agreements, including leave encashment based on total salary and not just basic salary, the company said.

Group health insurance will stay active until March 2026 or when the affected employees join a new job, whichever is earlier.

The Promotion and Regulation of Online Gaming Act, 2025, passed by Parliament on 21 August, bars all forms of online money games while promoting e-sports and other online games. The Bengaluru-based firm reported a net profit of Rs 706 crore on a revenue of Rs 4,009 crore in the fiscal year 2024-25. *—PTI*

Union Commerce & Industry Minister Piyush Goyal with Sheikh Hamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan **PHOTO: PTI**

'India, UAE trade doubles under partnership agreement'

ABU DHABI, 18 SEPT

Union Commerce & Industry Minister Piyush Goyal is in the UAE for a two-day visit to co-chair the 13th India-UAE High-Level Task Force on Investments (HLTFI) with HH Sheikh Hamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan.

The meeting will review the Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA), the Double Taxation Treaty, and central bank cooperation, while exploring new investments in space, maritime, and other high-potential sectors.

Since CEPA came into force in May 2022, bilateral merchandise trade has nearly doubled from USD 43.3 bn in FY21 to USD 83.7 bn in FY24, with a strong shift toward non-oil sectors, according to the Commerce Ministry.

Goyal will also co-chair the UAE-India Business Council roundtable with UAE Minister of Foreign Trade Dr Thani bin Ahmed Al Zeyoudi, engaging CEOs of top Indian and Emirati companies.

High-level meetings are scheduled with Sheikh Tahnoun bin Zayed Al Nahyan (UAE NSA & IHC Chairman), Ahmed Jasim Al Zaabi , and Syed Basar Shueb (IHC), among others.

Established in 2013, the HLTFI has become a key platform to resolve investor issues and deepen economic ties.

The India-UAE Comprehensive Strategic Partnership continues to expand across trade, technology, energy, defence, and food security, with both sides now pushing for the next growth leap. UAE remains one of India's most important strategic partners. Their Comprehensive Strategic Partnership is underpinned by deep political engagement, robust economic integration, and collaboration across energy, defence, technology, and food security. *—ANI*

MITSUI BECOMES YES BANK'S LARGEST SHAREHOLDER

NEW DELHI, 18 SEPT

Japan's Sumitomo Mitsui Banking Corporation (SMBC) has completed the acquisition of a 20 per cent stake in Yes Bank from state-owned State Bank of India (SBI) and other bank investors, the private sector lender announced on Thursday.

With this transaction, SMBC has become Yes Bank's largest shareholder, while SBI continues to hold a significant stake of over 10 per cent.

This milestone marks the largest cross-border investment in an Indian private sector bank.

The completion of the acquisition also includes the appointment of two SMBC nominee directors to Yes Bank's board. This move is expected to enhance governance and foster deeper strategic collaboration between the two entities. *—PTI*

'EXPAND CAPACITIES'

Sitharaman urges Indian industry to invest more without hesitation

NEW DELHI, 18 SEPT

Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Thursday urged Indian industry to capitalise on government policies and reforms and invest more to expand capacities. Addressing the Indian Foundation for Quality Management (IFQM) symposium, she called on companies to partner with the government in skilling youth and to engage throughout the year, not just ahead of the Budget.

Responding to a query from Tata Sons Chairman N Chandrasekaran on her key expectations from the industry, Sitharaman outlined three priorities: increase investments, collaborate in preparing youth for employment, and maintain ongoing engagement with the government. She highlighted initiatives aimed at improving ease of doing business, tax benefits, policy reforms, and attracting greater foreign direct investment.

"I hope there is no hesitation for industry to invest further, expand capacities, produce more in India, and specify what else is needed from the government," she said.

Chandrasekaran welcomed the call, noting the enormous opportunities India offers in both domestic and export markets. "More entrepreneurs, SMEs, and corporates making investments will allow us to capture these opportunities," he said, adding that India is an ideal destination for supply chain diversification under Prime Minister Narendra Modi's leadership.

Sitharaman also emphasised the importance of the MSME sector, the largest contributor to India's GDP, and said the government ensures that the Small Industries Development Bank of India (SIDBI) is physically present in MSME clusters to provide support, even in an era of digital banking. *—PTI*

Anand Rathi, Seshaasai, Jaro, Solarworld set for IPOs

NEW DELHI, 18 SEPT

Anand Rathi Share and Stock Brokers has set its price band at Rs 393–414 per share for a Rs 745-crore IPO, entirely a fresh issue. Seshaasai Technologies' Rs 813-crore IPO is priced at Rs 402–423 per share, comprising a Rs 480-crore fresh issue and a Rs 333-crore Offer for Sale (OFS). Proceeds will fund manufacturing expansion, debt repayment, and corporate purposes. Jaro Education plans to raise Rs 450 crore at Rs 846–890 per share, with Rs 170 crore as a fresh issue and Rs 280 crore via OFS. Solarworld Energy Solutions is launching a Rs 490-crore IPO at Rs 333–351 per share, combining a Rs 440-crore fresh issue and Rs 50-crore OFS. *—PTI*

India extends Maldives' $50M bond repayment deadline

MALE, 18 SEPT

PHOTO: PTI

India on Thursday said it has rolled over, for one more year, USD 50 million Maldives' government bonds as "an emergency financial assistance" to the archipelagic nation.

The deadline for the repayment of a USD 50 million Treasury Bill (T-bill) was extended once again "on the request of the Maldives government."

"Since March 2019, the Government of India has been facilitating subscription of several such Treasury Bills by the State Bank of India and rolling them over, annually, interest-free to the Government of Maldives," the Indian High Commission said in a statement here.

"On the request of the Government of Maldives, the State Bank of India has subscribed, for one more year, a USD 50 million Government Treasury Bill issued by the Ministry of Finance of Maldives," the statement said.

Maldives is India's key maritime neighbour and an important partner in India's 'Neighbourhood First' policy and Vision Mutual and Holistic Advancement for Security and Growth Across Regions (MAHASAGAR).

India has assisted Maldives in times of need and the subscription of this Treasury Bill, along with the Government of India's decision earlier this year to extend the special quota for export of essential commodities for Maldives and re-subscription of another T-bill, reflect India's continued support to the Government and the people of the Maldives, Indian mission added. *—PTI*

'INDIA'S 1ST PVT GOLD MINE TO START PRODUCTION SOON'

NEW DELHI, 18 SEPT

India's first large-scale private gold mine in Andhra Pradesh is expected to begin full production soon, Deccan Gold Mines Ltd (DGML) announced on Thursday. This is a major development, given that India currently imports around 1,000 tonnes of gold annually, making it the world's second-largest gold importer after oil.

DGML, the only gold exploration company listed on the BSE, holds a stake in Geomysore Services India Ltd, which is developing the Jonnagiri gold project in Kurnool district. It has secured environmental clearance in June and July, with state approvals being sought.

The mine is expected to produce 750kg of gold annually initially, with plans to scale up to 1,000 tonnes within two to three years. *—PTI*

'PRACTICED 100 TIMES'

Mark faces demo failures in Meta's AI glasses

SAN FRANCISCO, 18 SEPT

Meta CEO Mark Zuckerberg unveiled the company's latest AI-powered smart glasses at its annual developer event, Meta Connect, in partnership with Ray-Ban and Oakley. The flagship product, Meta Ray-Ban Display, features a full-colour high-resolution screen, 12MP camera, speakers, microphones, and Meta's AI assistant, all housed in a stylish frame priced at $799.

The glasses come with the Meta Neural Band — a wrist-worn EMG device that reads muscle signals, allowing users to control the glasses with subtle hand gestures. The Neural Band offers intuitive control, high accessibility, and up to 18 hours of battery life.

However, the live demos didn't go as planned. During a cooking demo, the AI assistant gave incorrect recipe instructions.

A second glitch occurred during a failed video call attempt, with connectivity blamed for both issues. "You practise 100 times and then WiFi gets you," Zuckerberg joked.

Despite the hiccups, Meta showcased key features including hands-free messaging, visual AI assistance, live video calls, pedestrian navigation, live captions and translation, and gesture-based music control.

The display is discreetly positioned off to the side for minimal distraction.

Meta also launched $499 Oakley Meta Vanguard glasses and the second-gen Ray-Ban Meta glasses at $379. Ray-Ban Display glasses will be available in the US from September 30, with expansion to the UK, Canada, France, and Italy in early 2026.

Zuckerberg called the new glasses a "huge scientific breakthrough" and part of Meta's vision for the future of wearable computing, blending AI, design, and daily utility. *—Agencies*

Meta CEO Mark Zuckerberg **PHOTO: PTI**

TSC, VI partner for AI-driven business support system

NEW DELHI, 18 SEPT

India's largest IT services company Tata Consultancy Services (TCS) has been selected by Vodafone Idea to transform its business support system through an AI-driven and future-ready platform, according to a release on Thursday.

The five-year engagement will help the telecom service provider unlock new capabilities in customer experience by deploying a platform focused on intelligence, automation, personalisation and accelerated launch of new products and services.

"Tata Consultancy Services...has partnered with Vodafone Idea to transform their business support system through an AI-driven and future ready platform," the release said but did not give the size of the deal.

The transformation will be anchored on TCS' flagship products, TCS HOBS and TCS TwinX.

Combining the two, the unified platform aims to drive service delivery, ensure resilient performance, and offer flexibility to adapt quickly to evolving customer needs. *—PTI*

PHOTO: PTI

Jurel's 100 drives India A's progress vs Australia A

LUCKNOW, 18 SEPT

Wicket-keeper batter Dhruv Jurel's unbeaten 113 underlined a collective batting show from India 'A' that reached 403 for four against Australia A on day three of the unofficial Test here Thursday.Apart from Jurel's 132-ball effort, India were also bolstered by half-centuries from overnight batter N Jagadeesan (64), B Sai Sudharsan (73), and an unbeaten 86 from Padikkal.Sipper Shreyas Iyer (8), though, could not make a mark.India A were trailing by another 129 runs as the contest heads for a draw. Earlier, a brisk century from Sam Konstas (109) and Josh Philippe's unbeaten 123 had taken the Australia A side to 532 for six declared.The teams will face off from 23-26 September for the second four-day unofficial Test before heading to Kanpur for a three-match one-day series. Australia A 1st innings: 532/6 decl India A 1st innings: 403/4 in 103 overs (N Jagadeesan 64, B Sai Sudharsan 73, Devdutt Padikkal 86, Dhruv Jurel 113 not out; Liam 1/31)—*PTI*

Title rivals Piastri, Norris bid to secure crown for McLaren

TOKYO, 18 SEPT

Championship leader Oscar Piastri and Lando Norris resume their world title battle in Azerbaijan this weekend, but could also secure McLaren the constructors' crown. Having won 12 of the 16 races to date this year between them, Piastri and Norris are already on the brink of wrapping up McLaren's 10th team title with seven races to spare. But the teammates are also locked in a race for the drivers' world championship, with Piastri leading Norris by 31 points after the Briton cut his lead last time out in Monza. Despite Max Verstappen's victory at the high-speed Italian Grand Prix, the return to a street circuit where Piastri triumphed last year should enable McLaren to resume normal service.—*PTI*

FIFA ranking: India drops one spot to 134

DUBAI, 18 SEPT

India dropped a spot to 134 in the latest FIFA rankings announced on Thursday, despite its creditable showing in the CAFA Nations Cup in Tajikistan. Khalid Jamil's Blue Tigers finished third in the eight-nation tournament after beating Oman on penalties in the play-off game earlier this month. European Champion Spain reclaimed the No. 1 spot for the first time in 11 years after its impressive showing in recent months.—*PTI*

PHOTO: X/@SHELBO800

Back on track after four years: Shelby Houlihan

TOKYO, 18 SEPT

For stretches of her four long years in running purgatory, the poster child for a drug-fighting system in sports that nobody truly understands was as likely to be seen driving her '71 VW minibus across the country as working out on the track. America's reigning 5,000-meter champion, Shelby Houlihan, used what is now known, infamously, as her "Burrito Ban" to scratch some things off her bucket list. She bought the burgundy bus sight unseen and logged an estimated 6,000 miles on a tour of America that wasn't possible when she was training. "I thought I didn't have running to hold me back," Houlihan said. "I've got to go do some fun things."—*PTI*

Neeraj misses podium for first time in 27 events

Sachin Yadav takes 4th spot at World Championships

TOKYO, 18 SEPT

Defending champion Neeraj Chopra endured a nightmarish outing at the World Championships' men's javelin throw finals to end a disappointing eighth, outperformed by debutant compatriot Sachin Yadav, who logged a personal best performance to finish a creditable fourth here on Thursday.

This marked the end Neeraj's 27 successive top two finishes, a run stretching back to June 2021, when he placed third at the Kourtane Games in Finland.

His best throw of 86.27m, which came in the very first attempt, was a personal best performance, and he bested not just Chopra but also German star Julian Weber (86.11m), and Olympic champion Arshad Nadeem (82.75m), among others.

The gold went to Keshorn Walcott (88.16m) of Trinidad and Tobago, followed by Grenada's Anderson Peters

Sachin *PHOTO: PTI*

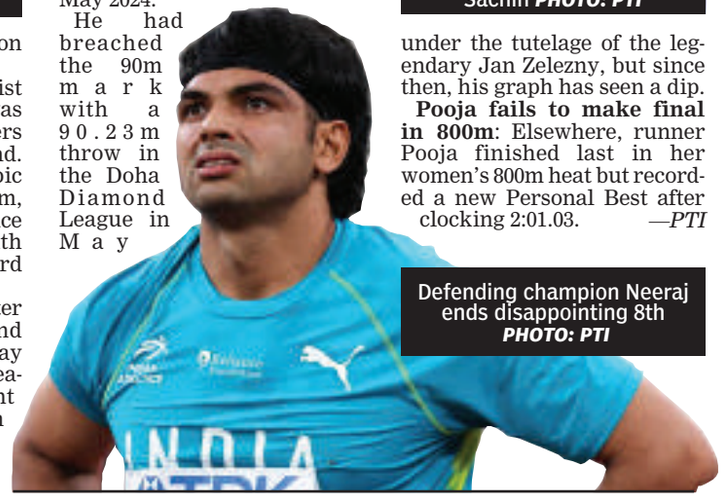
(87.38m) and Curtis Thompson (86.67m).

Nadeem, a silver-medallist in the previous edition, was among the first set of throwers to exit in the fourth round. Chopra, a two-time Olympic medallist, began with 83.65m, which put him at fifth place and improved upon it with 84.03m before fouling his third throw.

He dropped to eighth after the second round and remained there at the halfway stage.His fourth throw measured 82.86m, which meant that he had to better 85.54m and Kenya's Julius Yego in his fifth throw to remain in competition.But Chopra fouled his fifth attempt to end the day in disappointment. After releasing his spear, he fell sideways and crossed the curved line to see the red flag from the official.

Before Thursday, his worst was 82.27m while winning gold at the Federation Cup in May 2024.

He had breached the 90m mark with a 90.23m throw in the Doha Diamond League in May



Defending champion Neeraj ends disappointing 8th *PHOTO: PTI*

Sachin *PHOTO: PTI*

under the tutelage of the legendary Jan Zelezny, but since then, his graph has seen a dip.

Pooja fails to make final in 800m: Elsewhere, runner Pooja finished last in her women's 800m heat but recorded a new Personal Best after clocking 2:01.03. —*PTI*

Sindhu, Satwik-Chirag enter China Masters QFs

SHENZHEN, 18 SEPT

Star Indian shuttler PV Sindhu and the men's doubles pair of Satwiksairaj Rankireddy and Chirag Shetty sailed into the quarterfinals of the China Masters tournament with straight-game wins here on Thursday.

Sindhu, a two-time Olympic medallist, took just 41 minutes to get the better of sixth seed Pornpawee Chochuwong of Thailand 21-15, 21-15, while the pair of Satwik and Chirag, who recently reached the Hong Kong Open final, aced the Chinese Taipei duo of Hsiang Chieh Chiu and Wang Chi-Lin 21-13, 21-12 in 32 minutes.By virtue of the win, Sindhu, ranked 14th, improved her head-to-head record against the Thai shuttler to 6-5.Sindhu will meet top seed An Se Young of Korea in the quarterfinals. An Se edged past Mia Blichfeldt of Denmark 23-21, 21-14.Sindhu, who had exited the recently-concluded Hong Kong Open in the first round, was delighted with the straight-game victory and said she was alert from the start against her Thai opponent.I am happy with the win, and it was very important for me from the beginning to be alert and give my 100 per cent. She (Chochuwong) is a top player. I played her in the Indonesia Open; that time, it was a hard match. After winning the first game, I was much more alert in the second game. —*PTI*

PV Sindhu *PHOTO: PTI*

Shruti races past Sofia to enter quarterfinals

GURUGRAM, 18 SEPT

Shruti Ahlawat gave a hint of her attacking ability as she raced past Sofia Suslova 6-2, 6-3 in the pre-quarterfinals of the $15,000 ITF women's tennis tournament at the Tennis Project, Baliawas, on Thursday.

The 19-year-old Shruti, who has been training at the DLTA High Performance Centre for the last few months, exhibited better temperament and the ability to adapt to the situation, in finding her way to an authoritative performance.

Her Russian opponent had beaten the fourth seed in the first round. But Shruti did not give her much scope to stretch her stay on court. In the quarterfinals, Shruti will play sixth seed Vlada Mincheva.

Top seed Zeel Desai continued with her fighting ability and pipped Anna Sedysheva 4-6, 7-5, 7-6(2) in a thrilling contest. —*PTI*

Shruti Ahlawat *PHOTO: PTI*

Asian Games 2026: North Korea intends to participate

NEW DELHI, 30 OCT

Japan will consider whether to allow North Korean athletes to participate in next year's Asian Games in Nagoya after the North expressed its intention to take part, the Japanese government said on Thursday.

The neighbouring countries have no diplomatic ties, and North Korea was a no-show when Japan last hosted the Games in 1994.

Japan has banned North Korean citizens from entering the country since 2016 over its nuclear and ballistic missile programmes. However, it has allowed North Korean athletes to visit and take part in international sports events.

Kyodo News cited a source familiar with the matter as saying North Korea had expressed its intention to send about 150 athletes to compete in 17 events at the Games scheduled for September 19 to October 4 next year.

"The Asian Games' organising committee has consulted our sports ministry about the participation of North Korean athletes in this event," Japan's chief cabinet secretary, Yoshimasa Hayashi, told a daily briefing. —*PTI*

No Ronaldo, no problem for Al-Nassr

RIYADH, 18 SEPT

Cristiano Ronaldo was rested on Wednesday, but Saudi Arabia's Al-Nassr kicked off its Asian campaign with a 5-0 victory over Istiklol of Tajikistan. Former Liverpool star Sadio Mane completed the thrashing in Riyadh after earlier goals from Kingsley and Abdulrahman, as well as Brazilians Wesley and Angelo.

The Saudi Arabian club is the favorite in the Asian Champions League Two, Asia's second-tier competition. In the Asian Champions League Elite, all three Chinese clubs in action on Wednesday lost their opening games. —*PTI*

Mourinho *PHOTO: X/@UEFA*

JOSE MOURINHO WILL COACH IN PORTUGAL AGAIN

MADRID, 18 SEPT

Benfica said on Thursday it had reached a deal with Mourinho, sealing his return to the country 21 years after he led rival Porto to the UEFA Champions League title in 2004. Mourinho started his coaching career at Benfica in 2000 but lasted only three months before leaving in a contract dispute.

He will be back in the UEFA Champions League after a five-year absence, since a round-of-16 exit while coaching Tottenham in 2020. Mourinho also won the Champions League with Inter Milan in 2010.

He won the third-tier UEFA Conference League with Roma in 2022, but his time at the Italian club from 2021-24 was marked by squabbles that resurfaced in his brief and chaotic spell with Fenerbahce in Turkey.

His stint with Fenerbahce came to an end last month after the Turkish club was eliminated by Benfica in a qualifying playoff of the Champions League.

Benfica fired coach Bruno Lage on Wednesday, a day after the team's 3-2 home loss to Qarabag in the Champions League. Benfica squandered a two-goal lead in front of its fans. —*PTI*

WORLD ATHLETICS CHAMPIONSHIPS

Gold medalist Sydney McLaughlin-Levrone is all smiles after winning the Women's 400-meter title at the World Athletics Championships on Thursday in Tokyo *PHOTO: PTI*

Ashwin to be part of Indian team for Hong Kong Sixes

HONG KONG, 30 OCT

Former spinner Ravichandran Ashwin will be a part of the Indian team for the Hong Kong Sixes tournament to be held here from November 7-9, the organisers announced on Thursday.

Ashwin retired from all forms of international cricket last year during India's tour of Australia, and while he bid adieu to the Indian Premier League last month, the spin bowling legend said that he was available to ply his trade in various leagues across the world.

The organisers said in a release, "Widely regarded as one of the finest spin bowlers in modern cricket, Ashwin's inclusion adds immense depth, experience, and star power to Team India's campaign in this fast-paced, action-packed global tournament."

Ashwin said, "This format requires a different strategy and will prove to be high octane, which I am looking forward to playing alongside my ex-teammates.

I am also thrilled to compete against some quality players in the opposition teams; it will be a good challenge for us." —*PTI*

Former spinner Ravichandran Ashwin will be a part of the Indian team *PHOTO: PTI*

PSG routs Atalanta 4-0 in Champions League

PARIS, 18 SEPT

Paris Saint-Germain coped easily without its star forwards and could even afford to miss a penalty as it began its Champions League title defense with a 4-0 victory over Atalanta on Wednesday. The exceptional teamwork in coach Luis Enrique's side was a hallmark of their Champions League title run last season. It was on display once again as central defender Marquinhos, winger Khvicha Kvaratskhelia, left back Nuno Mendes, and substitute Gonçalo Ramos all scored at Parc des Princes. "It's a joy to see such a performance. I think our fans can be happy," Luis Enrique said. "We created a lot of chances and deserved the win." So far, it does not look like the crisis some PSG fans feared after Ousmane Dembélé and Désiré Doué, who starred in the 5-0 rout of Inter Milan in the Champions League final, both were injured on international duty with France this month. In their absence, 19-year-old striker Senny Mayulu got a rare start. He scored PSG's last goal against Inter on 31 May, and Luis Enrique selected him ahead of Ramos, who netted 19 goals in all competitions last season. —*PTI*

Khvicha Kvaratskhelia *PHOTO: @KVARA7*

ARCHERY PREMIER LEAGUE

Top archers to compete for six franchises

NEW DELHI, 18 SEPT

World number ones Andrea Becerra (compound) and Brady Ellison (recurve) are among 48 top archers who will compete in the inaugural Archery Premier League (APL), the first-ever franchise-based event, at the Yamuna Sports Complex here from 2 to 12 October.

Other top foreign archers featured in the six-team league are world number six Matias Grande of Mexico (recurve) and women's number one Mike Schloesser of the Netherlands (compound).

The Indian archers were selected based on their world rankingsOther women recurve archers include Ankita Bhakat and Bhajan Kaur, while the men's line-up features Neeraj Chauhan, Rahul, Rohit Kumar, Mrinal Chauhan, Sachin Gupta, and Krish Kumar.

PHOTO: PTI

Teams:

Prithviraj Yoddhas: Matias Grande, Andrea Becerra, Abhishek Verma, Gatha Anandroo, Priyansh, Sharvari Shende, Krish Kumar, Pranjal Salve.

Chero Archers: Mathias Fullerton, Katharina Bauer, Rahul, Prithika Pradeep, Atanu Das, Madala Hamsini, Sahil Rajesh, Kumkum Mohod.

Kakatiya Knights: Nico Wiener, Elia Canales, Neeraj Chauhan, Jyothi Surekha, Rohit Kumar, Avneet Kaur, Jignas, Tisha Punia.

Chola Chiefs: Brady Elison, Meeri-Marita Paas, Rishabh Yadav, Deepika Kumari, Tarundeep Rai, Taniparthi Chikitha, Pulkit Kajla, Anshika Kumari.

Mighty Marathas: Mike Schloesser, Alejandra Valencia, Dhiraj Bommadevara, Parneet Kaur, Aman Saini, Bhajan Kaur, Mrinal Chauhan, Madhura D.

Rajputana Royals: Mete Gazoz, Ella Gibson, Prathamesh Fuge, Ankita Bhakat, Ojas Pravin, Basanti Mahato, Sachin Gupta, Swati Dudhwal. —*PTI*

INDIA VS OMAN

India gears up for Pak clash with a prelude against Oman

DUBAI, 18 SEPT

The Suryakumar Yadav-led India will ideally prefer to bat first and make full use of the 20 overs when they take on an embattled Oman in their final Asia Cup group league game that will be played in Abu Dhabi on Friday. Having already qualified for the Super 4s and with one eye on the important rematch against arch-foes Pakistan on Sunday, the Oman game is a perfect opportunity for the team management to just get some wood on leather after two lopsided, low-scoring chases in the first two games. While Abhishek and Hardik Pandya has had a couple of blazing starts, Shubman Gill might want to bat a bit longer.

Hardik Pandya *PHOTO: PTI*

PHOTO: PTI

India vs Oman Match starts at **8.00 pm IST**

DP WORLD ASIA CUP 2025

Skipper Suryakumar had a good outing against Pakistan, but he would like Tilak Varma to get some more batting time.

Pakistan into Super Four

On a day of remarkable drama in the Asia Cup, Pakistan did just about enough to keep their focus and secure the win that guarantees them safe passage to the Super Four. But they had to weather a spirited bowling performance from the UAE, who gave them a mini-scare. However, an all-round performance from Shaheen and a team effort from the Pakistan bowlers ultimately sealed a 41-run victory. Pakistan 146 for 9 (Fakhar 50, Afridi 29*, Siddique 4-18, Simranjeet 3-26) beat UAE 105 (Chopra 35, Abrar 2-13, Afridi 2-16) by 41 runs. —*PTI*